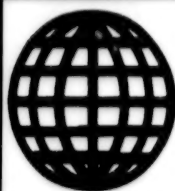


PRS-NEA-92-067
JUNE 1992



**FOREIGN
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JPRS Report

Near East & South Asia

Near East & South Asia

JPRS-NEA-92-067

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REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Saudis To Make Fifth Payment to PLO

92AE0353B London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
21 Apr 92 p 3

[Article: Riyadh Has Sent Payment of Popular Committees' Revenue to PLO"]

[Text] The director general of the Saudi Offices of Popular Committees to Aid the Palestinian Mujahidin, 'Abd-al-Rahim Jamus, announced that the fifth payment of the popular committees' revenue for the year 1991-1992—the second payment for 1992—was remitted to the PLO on 20 April 1992.

Jamus stated that, at the direction of Prince Salman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the emir of Riyadh Province and chairman of the Popular Committees to Aid the Palestinian Mujahidin, more than 5.5 million Saudi riyals (about \$1.5 million) was sent to the PLO.

Saudi Arabia remits the popular committees' revenue, collected from the 5-percent tax imposed on salaries of Palestinians working in Saudi Arabia and from donations of Saudi and Arab citizens, in an average of six payments per year. The first payment for this year, which was sent in February 1992, was \$3.25 million, while the total remitted during 1991 was \$14 million.

On this occasion, Jamus expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the custodian of the two holy mosques; to his crown prince and first deputy prime minister Prince 'Abdallah Bni-'Abd-al-'Aziz; to the second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation, and inspector general Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, and to Prince Salman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, "for their continuous support for the jihad of the Palestinian people."

Jamus praised Saudi Arabia's positions of support for the Palestinian issue in all forms and on the material and political levels, to enable the Palestinian people to regain their usurped rights, especially the right of return, self-determination, and the establishment of their independent state with its capital in holy Jerusalem.

Jamus thanked the Palestinian people working in Saudi Arabia for continuing to pay their obligations to their cause and to their people.

Minister Rules Out Gulf Securities Market

92AE0353A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
22 Apr 92 p 9

[Article: "Aba-al-Khayl: Establishing Gulf Market for Securities Not Priority Goal"]

[Text] The 31st meeting of the Finance and Economic Cooperation Committee of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] nations began on 22 April 1992 in Riyadh.

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned that, during their meetings, the finance ministers will discuss the latest developments in the program to finance growth in the Arab nations, in light of the results of the program committee's meetings. One meeting was held last month in Riyadh.

A joint meeting was scheduled for tomorrow, 23 April 1992, between the Finance and Economic Cooperation Committee and the Trade Cooperation Committee, but that meeting has been postponed.

Muhammad Aba-al-Khayl, the Saudi finance and national economy minister, stated that he was not convinced that it would be possible to establish a unified Gulf securities market. In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, he said that he does not think it would be possible to attain this goal quickly, and that it does not represent a major priority. He added that it would be best for the GCC to have the Arab Gulf nations complete economic unity in all its various aspects, including the customs federation and application of joint regulations and arrangements pertaining to economic activities in the GCC countries.

Aba-al-Khayl made it clear that each GCC country looked at the subject of the unified Gulf financial market differently. Moreover, the stages attained by financial markets in each country differed from one to another. He pointed out that, ultimately, there will be unified arrangements to facilitate unifying financial markets among GCC nations, although that does not represent a near-term or priority goal.

Concerning developments pertaining to unifying customs tariffs and attaining this goal within the period specified by the GCC leaders at the Muscat summit, the Saudi finance and national economy minister said: "I am optimistic about achieving that. There is increased awareness by the GCC member states of the importance of this goal."

In meetings that will continue for two days, the committee, comprised of ministers of finance and national economy of the GCC nations, is scheduled to discuss a number of GCC Secretariat General memoranda concerning economic cooperation, headed by the interim program to implement the remaining provisions of the Unified Economic Agreement, and actions to give increased impetus to areas of fiscal, monetary, and customs cooperation among the member states. The committee will also discuss trade, economic, professional, and tradesmen's activities in the member states, in addition to studying the conditions of companies, organizations, funds, and Arab financial institutions established within the framework of the Arab League in which GCC nations participate. This will include negotiations with nations in GCC unified economic groups, along with certain articles of an agreement to facilitate commercial exchanges among Arab countries.

Egypt Refuses Iraqi Oil Exchange

92AF0730A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
28 Apr 92 p 10

[Article: Egypt Rejects Iraqi Proposal To Swap Egyptians' Earnings for Oil"]

[Text] Egypt has rejected an Iraqi proposal to exchange the financial earnings of Egyptians for Iraqi oil. Officials in Cairo described the proposal as "aimed at damaging Egyptian interests, in view of the international embargo imposed on the export of Iraqi oil."

It has been decided that the government will submit a comprehensive report to the parliament [People's Assembly] early next week concerning the fate of money orders that were carried by Egyptians returning from Iraq. Disbursement of their delayed financial earnings has been stopped as a result of Baghdad's procrastination in paying out this money since the Gulf crisis.

A special meeting of the parliament's Economic and Labor Committees will be held to study the report, which will include the results of indirect contacts with Iraq concerning Egyptian remittances and earnings. These contacts are being made through the Indian Embassy in Baghdad, which is responsible for seeing to Egyptian interests there, as well as with the Arab and international labor organizations.

The report will also include Egypt's position on Iraq's repeated attempts to exchange these financial earnings for oil. Egypt has refused to do that, in view of the embargo imposed on the export of Iraqi oil as one of the international sanctions imposed by the [UN] Security Council.

The government estimates the payments owed by Iraq at \$600 million, according to initial calculations. In addition, compensations are expected to be paid through the International Compensation Committee, formed inside the UN to implement the Security Council resolutions issued to deal with the fallout from the Gulf crisis. AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned that part of this compensation will be paid out of the money that will be available if the United States uses Iraq's frozen assets, which it has been holding since the Gulf crisis, to pay compensation for damages from the crisis. This is one of the solutions proposed to expedite payment of these monies and to put an end to the Iraqi regime's procrastination in this matter. During this parliamentary meeting, it is expected that the government will also submit a report on efforts by Egyptian officials, who are working in Iraq through the Indian Embassy in Baghdad, to resolve the problems of Egyptian workers there whose passports are no longer valid.

PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS**Analysis: National Movement in Crisis**

92AE0298B London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
11 Mar 92 p 3

[Article by Rabi al-Husari: "National Movement in Occupied Territories Experiencing Crisis, PLO 'Stamps of Approval' No Longer Sufficient"]

[Text] Occupied Jerusalem—The prevailing situation and ongoing developments in the occupied territories, apart from the ongoing negotiations between Israel and a Palestinian delegation from these territories, reflect a reality that almost everyone acknowledges. Whoever does not acknowledge it publicly does so privately: the national movement is in crisis.

One can read the signs of this crisis in the results of the local chamber of commerce elections that began last year and still continue. One can also read them in the criticism of the routine of the resistance or the intifadah. For years, the national movement has been content to talk about the latter, without moving to escalate it. Another sign seems to be what observers of conditions in the occupied territories have begun to notice, something that may intensify in the future, a "normalization" that Israel has begun to implement in the territory. It is as if there were no negotiations between Israel and the inhabitants of the occupied territories over how they are to manage the affairs of their lives, their future, and their resources in the coming period.

The phrase "national movement" designates nationalist institutions, nationalist personalities, and nationalist groups. All of them profess loyalty to the PLO. They refer to it to propose their political positions and for their *raison d'être*. In short, the national movement constitutes the form of the PLO's presence within the territories.

The fact that the national movement in the occupied territories is in crisis in no way means that support for the PLO among Palestinians in the territories has been disturbed or shaken. On the contrary, support for the PLO among the Palestinian grassroots remains firm. Every Palestinian is a nationalist, whether he is an official in an organization, a merchant in the market, or a student in a school or college.

One observer says that one of the reasons for the national movement's crisis is that the PLO's "stamp of approval" on someone is no longer sufficient for that particular person to win the confidence of the masses. The Islamic bloc's victory last week in Chamber of Commerce and Industry elections in the West Bank city of Ramallah, a national movement stronghold, may have sounded the alarm and made some people wake up and acknowledge the existence of the crisis.

The Islamic resistance movement Hamas formed a slate of 10 candidates to enter the Ramallah Chamber of

Commerce elections after the national bloc rejected an offer to form a unified slate in which Islamic bloc candidates would occupy five seats, versus six for national bloc candidates. The national bloc formed its slate with a candidate for each of the left-of-center PLO factions, with the remainder for Fatah. The Islamic slate won the 10 seats; the national bloc suffered a devastating failure.

Analysts saw the vote by merchants of a city with about 7,000 Christian residents as a clear message that the PLO stamp of approval that the national bloc candidates were satisfied to proclaim without worrying about the wishes of the business community, or the concerns of grassroots Palestinians, was not enough to win trust for them. What is troubling, according to observers and analysts, is not the Islamists' victory, which the latter may interpret as a boost to their power and influence, but rather the failure of the nationalists. It is a failure that applies to their coalition-forming mechanism, which is beset by factionalism, divisions, and individualism, as the members of the nationalist camp themselves admit.

At every anniversary marking the beginning of a new year since the outbreak of the intifadah, factions of the national movement continue to repeat that the ardor of the intifadah, which was born as a mass movement, has begun to wane and that its damages sometimes exceed its benefits. The communiques of these factions regularly appear; the last of them, Number 80, repeated in a routine way what had already been said in communiques Number 70, 60, 50, and 40. This bureaucratic routine reflects another aspect of the crisis. Everyone agrees that the methods of the intifadah as of its second year need to be reviewed. At the same time, everyone is content that as long as the communique issued by the Unified National Leadership of the Intifadah carries in its heading the slogan, "No voice rises above the voice of the PLO," Palestinians will implement the instructions that this voice gives concerning general strike days, even if this is against their interest.

Observers fear that the national movement will wake up some day and find that the Israeli authorities have set up a "non-nationalist" Palestinian authority—like the one mentioned in the Camp David agreement's autonomy formula—through what some have called the "piecemeal normalization" that the Israelis are energetically promoting these days.

For many months, occupation authorities have been trying to find a point of entry for such normalization by appointing municipal councils to replace the elected ones dismissed in 1981, thereby implementing autonomy unilaterally. They have proposed that the Palestinians themselves appoint municipal councils in Gaza and Nablus, but with military government approval for each appointed member. This attempt failed when the Palestinian factions rejected the idea of making appointments and demanded that the authorities hold free elections.

These attempts are still being repeated in various forms. Most recently, the West Bank attorney Fayiz Abu-Rahmah, whom the authorities unsuccessfully assigned to form an appointed council several months ago, announced that a municipal council for Gaza might be formed within two weeks. Abu-Rahmah's announcement came after his return from a long visit to Amman to discuss the question with important Palestinian officials. Some people were led to wonder whether Abu-Rahmah had carried a "stamp of approval" back with him this time.

Analysts assert that "stamps of approval" are no longer of any use and that the phrase "national movement" also is almost worn out. The first of these facts may surprise the members of the Palestinian negotiating delegation just returned from Washington. Whenever foreign correspondents asked its members how they knew that the Palestinian grassroots approved of their representing them, they replied that the PLO was the one who had chosen the delegation and that everyone agreed that the PLO was his representative. The second of these facts also calls for thought. Is anyone who does not vote for those who carry "stamps of approval" to be deemed not a nationalist? Are the Islamists not nationalists? If they are not, what are they?

Jadallah: Western-Style Democracy Undesirable

92AE0298A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
18 Mar 92 p 14

[Article by Muhammad Jadallah (physician, political activist in the occupied territories): "Democracy's Ambiguity, Complex Palestinian Preconditions for It"]

[Text] Bourgeois democracy produces Thatcher, Bush, and Yitzhak Shamir. Is this the democracy we want?

Western democracy is the democracy of the bourgeoisie. It is based on guaranteeing only political freedom, without guaranteeing social or cultural freedom. Thus, it has led to social injustice and to a social domination that the propertied class imposes on the other classes. It has also led to the pursuit of colonial policies for many decades in the countries of the Third World. Democratic principles have not prevented most Western countries from backing and supporting racist fascist regimes or dictatorial reactionary regimes.

The issue of democracy often emerges with urgency during the great turning points and crises in our life. It comes to occupy a prominent place because people are interested in tracing the causes of the crisis to it; yet the amount of analysis accorded to it remains low. Although the presence of the issue of democracy in our Palestinian community inspires confidence and stimulates optimism, serious work awaits both politicians and academics if democracy, in form and in content, is to become a daily issue for us.

The eighties may be considered the decade when the mass cadres and institutions constituting the infrastructure of the future Palestinian state took shape and were built. Most of these cadres and institutions employed the method of democratic action. This provided them a mechanism for two-way openness—their being open to the people, and the people's being open to them. It led to broad participation. It provided a mechanism for decision-making and for monitoring, with a view toward improving these institutions' performance and developing their effectiveness and the result of their labor. These institutions were able to create specifically modern forms of action that satisfied people's needs and developed people's abilities and resources in terms of national confidence, which is the fundamental premise for fighting and defeating the occupation. Of course, one must measure the level of democratic life by reviewing the successes and failures of these institutions, not by claims based on affiliation or stand. Yet merely freeing oneself from the circle of stereotypes and worn-out forms of action may be considered a great achievement in itself. Through the clear vision and the relentless, persistent work of a new political structure, it became possible to create new relations and new ways of thinking—in other words, new political traditions wherein there abounded a special kind of democratic method that encouraged new numbers of people to seek their place within the national movement. Having found an expression of themselves through these mass institutions and cadres, they began not only to acquire democratic concepts, but also to generalize this pattern in their communities and workplaces. The circle of self-confidence and respect for others widened, as did the circle of understanding and acceptance of the dissident opinion. Totalitarian concepts began to fall, yielding to the rising thrust of democratic concepts as a fitting, complete alternative to concepts at variance with the movement of individuals and groups. This is precisely the road leading to the building of a democratic society. It is the greatest achievement that the movement of the Palestinian masses has reached under the occupation.

As for our Arab kinsmen, they have accepted being at a lower level than their counterparts around the world. This is what our political systems have accepted, and our socio-cultural movement has also accepted it. They have accepted a lower level in human rights and of democracy. Furthermore, the West has lorded it over us, stereotyping us as unqualified for, or undeserving of, democratic life. This made it easy for them and for the ruling regimes in the Arab world to suppress this right and commit crimes against our peoples.

As for the "enlightened" political regimes that are constitutionally required to cope with political pluralism, they take refuge in the 99.99 [percent] game. They practice it once every 10 years; then they make it eternal. These authoritarian rulers do not hesitate, if need be, to use or borrow some Marxist terms to discredit pluralism. They describe it as fake democracy, a front for the dominion of the bourgeoisie and capital. If one of these

regimes happens to be forced to hold free elections, then instead of handing over power when toppled by the elections and ejected by its people, it turns to tanks and troops to protect its "democracy." It nevertheless enjoys the favor of the Western democracies and also, if need be, their financial support.

As for the Palestinian situation, its case is peculiar and exceptional in a way unprecedented in the history of peoples. The PLO bears a twofold responsibility. On the one hand, it leads the national struggle; on the other hand, as the state, it performs the functions of government. It is quite difficult for it to reconcile these two functions without falling into error. What is required is a kind of action that suits this peculiar and exceptional situation. As a government, the PLO is trying to find a position in this world ruled by conflicts, balances of power, and conflicting interests. As leader of the national struggle, it is responsible for representing its people, expressing their interests, maintaining their rights, and not entering into bargains or settlements. Performing the two functions turns out to be something difficult beset by constraints and producing shortcomings on all sides. The situation has led to the development of a complex crisis of democracy, revolving around the PLO's method of dealing with its masses, particularly those in the occupied territories. In some important stages of the struggle, we find the PLO curbing and hesitating, instead of taking an initiative position. Or we find it resorting to an authoritarian style instead of dialogue and consultation. Instead of maintaining a state of political development, we find it suffering from political instability. This has led to the spread of the kind of corruption that steals public resources to realize private objectives or political privileges by controlling power. Coalition relations within the PLO are turning into a monopolization of decision-making and implementation. This is leading to a deterioration of coalition life and hence to deviation and hegemony.

Democracy is both the means and the end. It is the mechanism by which we can arrive at realizing our national hopes and aspirations. By democracy, we also can defend our national unity, which guarantees us the achievement of independence.

The occupied West Bank and Gaza are witnessing a "social formation" with special distinctive features and characteristics. This formation lives in a society threatened with subjection to an occupying, colonizing force. The formation carries within its makeup the elements of constant change and development that guarantee not only its ability to maintain its vigor, steadfastness, and continuity, but also its ability to defeat the occupying, colonizing force and provide the conditions that drive toward achieving national independence. This social formation is based on new classes, forces, and sections of Palestinian society that only a decade ago had no political weight. At the same time, other traditional forces are registering a clear, perceptible, and irreversible decline. While youths, people from villages and camps, and women take up forward leadership positions in the ranks

of the national movement, the influence of the traditional political leadership based on family is ending. It no longer forms an important element in the arena of national action. This formation, which was born and arose through the struggle, has been able to develop mechanisms of national action and to promote them by planning and organization on the level of major national goals. It builds clubs in various places. It establishes relations among associates based on mutual respect, trust, and mutual reliance. In addition, new economic forces have developed through the cooperatives and production groups that are arising, developing, and prospering in this time of the intifadah. Their special type of relations has been created by the circumstances of the struggle under the occupation. Thus, this formation is becoming one of the achievements of the intifadah. It is leading, step by step, to a special kind of political and social democracy. The new social formation and its democratic path will be very important in defining the future of our people and the form of their political system.

The problems that have been raised are very serious, very special, cause great anxiety in our minds, and attract the close attention of every individual in our society under the occupation. Especially at such times—when some self-deceived parties face a crisis by alleging altered balances of power in order to justify a policy of the art of the possible, and a course of rushing toward the abyss—holding to fundamentals, principles, and constants and holding to democracy remains our way to stability and to realizing our national goals. We do not need traditional democracy. We want to fashion our democracy by ourselves, for ourselves, a democracy peculiar to us, one based on effective participation by all classes and sections of the people, one that enables people to form their ideas and defend them through social praxis, which defines and establishes the content and meaning of the democratic process and which guarantees its maintenance and continuance.

'Arafat's Use of Israeli Arab Vote

92AE0347A HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 20 Apr 92 p B3

[Article by Guy Behor: "'Arafat Sent A Fax'"]

[Text] When the satirical French weekly LE CANARD ENCHAINE published an item last week, reporting that Yasir 'Arafat is interfering in the election campaign in Israel and recommending that Israeli Arabs vote against the Likud, the Israeli political establishment raged. Without going into whether the item is indeed true, the phenomenon is not new: the interference attempts by the PLO in the Israeli election campaigns, via the Arab sector, existed in the last two election campaigns, at least.

On 30 March, "Land Day," a facsimile page signed by Yasir 'Arafat was received by several Arab institutions in the Galilee. There was a greeting for Land Day, "the day that has become eternal by the blood of our martyrs." At

the same time, 'Arafat wrote to Israeli Arabs words that were even published in all of the Arab and Israeli newspapers: "This national holiday (Land Day) has arrived, and you are on the verge of a parliamentary election campaign for the Knesset, and the Knesset is an Israeli position ruled by Israeli laws that were created for Israel. Nevertheless, it is our sanctified national obligation to turn it into a battlefield. By your unity and consensus, we will be able to stop and restrain the arrogance, violence, and racism of the government of Israel, which the Oriental Jews have also started to suffer from recently."

To eliminate any doubt with regard to the PLO's intentions in the current election campaign, very high ranking PLO members met several weeks ago in Cyprus with the three representatives of the central forces in the Arab sector—HADASH [Democratic Movement for Peace and Equality], The Progressive List for Peace, and the Arab Democratic Party—in an attempt to persuade the latter two to unite. On the Israeli side, Hashem Mahmir of HADASH participated, along with 'Abd al-Wahab Darousha of the Arab Democratic Party and Vasal Taha', the recently elected head of the K'far Kana local council, of the Progressive List for Peace. "Such unification would turn the Arabs into the balancing factor in the Knesset," said PLO figures. So far, it has not done any good. To date, personal rivalries have prevented overall Arab unification of this type.

In the previous elections to the Knesset, one of the senior figures and founders of the PLO, currently the chairman of the foreign relations committee of the Palestinian National Council, Halad al-Hasan, explicitly called upon the "voter in Israel" to support the parties that support an international conference. "The PLO calls upon the Arab and Jewish voters in the occupied Palestinian homeland to exercise their right to vote and to support the lists with positions matching those of the PLO and supporting the convening of an international conference. If the appeal of the PLO causes the opposite reaction for the Jewish voter, by weighing the balance in favor of the Likud, then it will be clear that the Israelis do not want an international conference and peace. In this case, as well, the PLO will profit," he said.

Al-Hasan's statements were broadcast on Monte Carlo Radio, which is heard in every Arab home in Israel and the territories; therefore, they were widely listened to. It is impossible to know whether they ultimately influenced the Arab voter. When asked whether he had a clear preference between the Likud and the Labor party, al-Hasan said to the Arab voter in Israel: "the only difference between Peres and Shamir is that the Likud wants you to drink the poison immediately, without adding anything, and even without ice, while the Alignment gives out the same poison, but mixed with honey."

Similar intervention by the PLO occurred in 1984, as well, when a harsh war of defamation was waged between RAKAH and the Progressive List for Peace, regarding the question of which party had been granted

the support of the PLO. Activists from both of these parties met with senior PLO officials, and both sides waved pictures of its people embracing Yasir 'Arafat.

PLO involvement in the elections in Israel angers part of the Arab sector, which views this as paternalistic patronage that is no longer necessary. "Elements outside of the state of Israel must not interfere with regard to the Israeli Arabs, particularly in a matter like elections, and I am aware of the relations between the strata of the Palestinian people, etc.," said Lotfi Masour, the editor of the influential weekly A-SINARA. "We do not interfere in their affairs and, please, let them not take an interest in our affairs." This adamant position by Masour did not prevent him from printing in the colors of the Palestinian flag the facsimile page that 'Arafat sent to the editorial offices of his newspaper in Nazareth. "We substantially designed this interference by the PLO," said Masour, "since those who ran after 'Arafat to obtain his recognition were representatives of the Israeli Arab parties. The PLO would not have interfered if the interference had not been ordered from here."

Others claim that additional foreign elements are stirring the kettle of Arab politics in Israel, such as Egypt. Yesterday, three senior Arab politicians left for Cairo—Muhammad Mi'ari, 'Abd al-Wahab Darousha, and Ibrahim Nimer Husayn—and there are already those attacking them for the trip. Contrary to Masour's statements, the connection between the Arabs of Israel and the PLO, as significantly manifested during election periods, is not one way on the part of the Israeli Arabs, but it serves an interest of the PLO itself.

Until the 1970s, the PLO did not relate to the issue of the Israeli Arabs, whose leaders sometimes scorned them. Indeed, the Arabs of Israel are not represented in the Palestine National Council, which is supposed to include all sectors of Palestinian society. But this tendency started to change in the mid-1970s, when the heads of the PLO started to espouse a policy of incorporating the Arab minority into the overall Palestinian national effort—"while recognizing its potential as a rising force possessing demographic, political, social and economic strength within Israel itself," as Dr. Eli Rehes, a researcher of the Arabs of Israel, writes in a book on the intifadah. "Since then, the PLO has directed its attention to encouraging an awareness of Palestinian identity among Israeli Arabs, to creating a direct tie between the PLO leadership and senior activists, and to an attempt to direct the patterns of thought and the horizons of political activity to a path that will suit the interests of the PLO." Rehes writes that manifestations of identification of Israeli Arabs with the uprising in the territories and their unification around the PLO leadership were therefore welcomed, inasmuch as this development suited the general strategy of the organization. Senior figures in the PLO, among them Jamal al-Tsurani, a member of the executive committee, explicitly clarified that "the uprising is the political resurrection of the Palestinian people, and all are partners, whether the Arabs of 1948 (this is the term used by the PLO for Israeli Arabs) or of

1967, or the Palestinians outside of the borders. The participation of the Arabs of 1948 is not new, but continuous."

Beyond drawing the Israeli Arabs closer to the struggle of the Palestinian people, the PLO assesses the influence that they can exert over Israeli policy through their electoral power, which is increasing from a demographic perspective (although in the upcoming elections this power will decrease, due to the immigration from the former Soviet Union).

This is manifested by repeated appeals by 'Arafat and his advisers to Israeli Arabs, calling to increase voting participation and to unite the political forces, and to refer the voters toward a certain Jewish Israeli party.

These appeals are accompanied by funds that are sent from outside of Israel to various associations, people, committees, and institutions. Nobody in the Arab sector tends to expound upon this matter.

ALGERIA

Haroun on State of Country, Human Rights

92AF0698B Algiers LE SOIR D'ALGERIE in French
7 Apr 92 p 3

[Interview with Ali Haroun, member of the High State Committee, by Akila Benhamed; place and date not given; first paragraph is LE SOIR D'ALGERIE introduction]

[Text] Mr. Ali Haroun, a member of the HCE [High State Committee], met with one of our journalists and willingly responded to her questions about the state of the country, the press, human rights, and many other subjects. Conducted at a rapid-fire pace, this interview offers some needed insight after the HCE's long silence.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Tell us about the new monitoring agency that has replaced the ministry of human rights. Is it being used to bail the country out of its financial crisis or does it truly protect citizens' rights?

[Ali Haroun] What can a monitoring agency do? When Mr. Ghazali formed his government in 1991, a ministry of human rights was created—the first in an Arab, Muslim country. That was a great step forward.

We established the guidelines for human rights in Algeria: the preservation of man's physical well-being, dignity, and moral values. A universal charter of human rights also exists, and it defines all that is encompassed by them: the right to health care, to housing, etc.

We at the ministry viewed its founding under the new government as a political act. In other words, what one government had created, another could take away.

The little that we had accomplished in six months did not seem secure in our eyes. We decided it would be better to create another mechanism—an institute, a

council, or a monitoring board, and in the end, the term "monitoring board" was chosen. It will be completely independent of the political power structure. It will have a separate operating budget so that it can perform its work without being subject to the political will of the moment.

The purpose of the monitoring board is to ensure and perpetuate the concept of human rights in Algeria, and the protection and defense of those rights.

Protection and defense from whom? From the power structure. The monitoring board is, one could say, a government watch-dog agency, whereas the ministry was a part of the government and its status was therefore ambiguous.

I may be repeating myself, but I would say that the monitoring board serves to protect human rights.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Then how do you explain the abuses that are routinely seen. The rights of certain citizens, known antifundamentalists, have been blatantly disregarded in mockery of the law and human rights and yet you took no action.

[Ali Haroun] First of all, the monitoring board is not yet operational. The ministry of human rights no longer exists, but the administration has not shut down. It continues to be notified of complaints....

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] But, to take the example of the "Kherroubi" case—a major case, by the way—why was there no action taken?

[Ali Haroun] The monitoring board, as I have already stated, is in the process of being set up. An interim director is working to organize the agency as outlined in the decree that authorized it.

The board will be made up of 26 individuals named by various nongovernmental organizations. Once selected, these 26 individuals will meet—some time this week, I believe—to elect from among themselves a president and vice president. At that point, the board will become fully operational. You mentioned the case of a journalist who was arrested. His colleagues contacted the monitoring board as of his arrest.

The interim director met them and, following the meeting, wrote a letter to the Minister of Justice, stating: "I draw your attention to the fact that an order to place the accused in detention is unnecessary in a defamation case, etc. [closing quotation mark missing] The judge has the right to do so, but the decision was premature; it was entirely possible to allow the investigation to proceed, to allow the case to come to trial. If guilty of defamation, the journalist would then be sentenced. Did you know that many ministers in the Ghazali cabinet and a good many others have been subjected to defamation by journalists? Why? Because we are dealing with young journalists who do not yet have the experience to know how far their freedom can be taken.

There is a line that must not be crossed.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Forgive me, Mr. Minister, but these former ministers and even the new ones are used to hearing a language we no longer speak, the language of pre-1988. Since 1988, there has been a sea change in the way journalists work and we do not always say what they want to hear. Could it be that these people are still living under the old single-party system?

[Ali Haroun] You are perfectly right. For 25 years we lived under a regime in which it was out of the question to say anything about a minister, much less the president. The media of that era—radio, television, and newspapers—unanimously applauded the government. We have progressed to another stage, no doubt about it. But I must point out that the press can be beneficial to our society by playing a major political and educational role. The press can educate the people. You have the right to give your assessment of an event or a public official. You can criticize a minister's policies or strategy. But the law does not allow you to say that he is a thief or a crook, because as the law puts it, "you are free to express your opinion in the press; any allegations injurious to the good name or reputation of an individual are punishable." If there is no proof of the allegations.

The burden of proving your statements, your accusations lies with you. And if you cannot prove them, you have violated the law.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] But in the Mahmoudi case, evidence was presented, and so I will call that abuse. What happened to human rights in that case?

[Ali Haroun] In the case of Mahmoudi, he published the names of some 20 people who charge that false or unfounded attestations were issued by the Ministry of Moudjahidine.

You have the right to print that, but at the same time, anyone who feels that his good name or reputation has been harmed may bring suit.

In the Mahmoudi case, he has the right to publish whatever he wants, just as the judge has the legal authority to issue a detention order, although it was premature. I think that it was unnecessary to put Mahmoudi in prison. It would have been better to wait until the facts had been heard and the case decided. There was nothing illegal about the Mahmoudi case; only untimeliness. I must point out that journalists have been obstreperous in their coverage....

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Why do we not go back to the question of the monitoring board and its financial guarantee.

[Ali Haroun] The monitoring board does not engage in politics; its job is to ensure that laws are not broken and to draw the attention of public institutions to all violations that are made known to it.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] An advisory opinion?

[Ali Haroun] Its opinion may be sought but it has the power to intervene without being asked to do so.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Then a binding ruling?

[Ali Haroun] Neither an advisory opinion nor a binding ruling. The monitoring board will draw the attention of public institutions to every violation and it will do so without informing the public. It will not announce its actions to the public. Only at the end of the year will the board draft a complete report of its activities that will be submitted to the president of the republic and the speaker of the APN [National Popular Assembly] once legislative elections have taken place.

The board's report will reveal the cases that are pending—not those which have been resolved—so as to force the public institutions and the decisionmakers to act upon the unresolved cases. It is a means of applying indirect pressure on them to resolve problems. The monitoring board gives us the power to accomplish quite a few things.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Then, are the security camps a settled problem, a definitive solution to the problem of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front]?

[Ali Haroun] We have placed people in security camps not because they were members of the FIS, but because the authority that placed them there believed their behavior likely to encourage unrest. By the way, some of them are to be released.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] It seems that a general has either resigned or been transferred? Why?

[Ali Haroun] That is a rumor. I am not aware of anything that would prompt a general's resignation.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] So, a general has, in fact, resigned?

[Ali Haroun] Frankly, I am not aware of it.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Kebir has been released. Does his release not contradict the very existence of security camps?

[Ali Haroun] As a member of the HCE and former human rights minister, I said that we have a justice system in this country and it must be allowed to do its job. We have laws and individuals who enforce them, so let us let them carry out their responsibilities, just as we let the press carry out its mission. If there are sufficient charges against Kebir, he will continue to be held, otherwise he will be released. That does not mean that the case is closed.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] The press has mentioned an FIS government-in-exile. What can you tell us about that?

[Ali Haroun] That strikes me as hardly serious.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] The High State Committee has not been publicly visible lately, as it was at first. Why is that?

[Ali Haroun] That is correct. The High Committee of State issued a weekly statement prior to Ramadan every Tuesday. During the month of Ramadan, however, only two statements were released. That does not mean that the HCE is not at work. Its members are in constant contact. They did not think it useful to make a statement since the government has published a great deal about current economic problems. But we meet regularly. Our work continues.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] What has become of Tedjini Haddam [another HCE member]? We have heard nothing further about him recently.

[Ali Haroun] Mr. Haddam had an important problem to take care of: the mosque of Paris. He had to make several trips in order to defend Algeria's rights. The problem is practically solved. I can tell you that by 15 April, Mr. Haddam will have completely cleared up the problems involving the mosque in Paris.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Despite assurances from the HCE, the citizens had to pay exorbitant prices for goods during the month of Ramadan. Are we to conclude that the government is unable to implement its own program?

[Ali Haroun] You are right to raise that question. Before the start of Ramadan, the HCE had warned Algerians to be wary of speculators. Prices skyrocket at this time every year. I can assure you that for the government's part, sufficient quantities of meat have been imported to cover all needs. The problem is at the distribution level.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Yes, Algerians are well aware that everything is available on the market but at unaffordable prices.

[Ali Haroun] There are two categories of products, one subject to government price controls, while in the other category (fruits and vegetables), prices are determined by the marketplace. Algeria imports 60 percent of what it consumes, and that is not as it should be. The simple fact of the matter is that we are now paying for the unrealistic agricultural policy decisions of successive governments.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Will we continue to pay for a long time?

[Ali Haroun] Your generation will have much to do. I do not want to be overly optimistic, but I believe that in three or four years, conditions in Algeria will be infinitely brighter because it is a rich country. Only mismanaged.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Is the legalization of "trabendo" [the black market] a better management approach?

[Ali Haroun] That is what I heard in the news this morning: "the legalization of trabendo." Those are

strong words. What we are trying to do is quite simple, and that is to allow businesses to import basic consumer goods—not luxury items—without a license. We will help businesses in their dealings with the customs authorities.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Algerians have the impression that they are reliving an era they thought was over. As a member of the HCE, which areas should be the focus of your efforts, apart from what has already been mentioned, to restore the people's trust in the government?

[Ali Haroun] The HCE's foremost concern is to provide housing for the population, particularly for the new generation. You are no doubt aware of the fact that there are 40-year-old Algerians who have not married because of overcrowded living conditions. The average occupancy per room in Algeria is 7.3 percent [as published]. Construction must get under way. Our country has a shortage of 1.2 million dwellings. Algeria has a shortage of 1.5 million jobs. Employment and construction problems cannot be entirely solved in 22 or 23 months, which is the duration of the HCE's term of office. We have established contacts abroad. There are many companies willing to come to Algeria to work. In Europe, they are willing to offer financing, because the events in Algeria in December and January could have negative repercussions in Europe.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Before we close, let us return to the press. There are those who wonder if the pressure on the press is in fact a campaign orchestrated by the HCE and carried out by the judges.

[Ali Haroun] I can tell you one thing: No orders have been issued to the press. You are in a position to know that you are not instructed to write favorably of the HCE. No one has asked you to sing its praises. This is a democracy and we are in favor of freedom of the press.

The HCE has never intervened with regard to the judicial system. Why? If it had, it would never have authorized that "detention order" that triggered an outcry and—however slightly—destabilized our country. For one full week, all attention was riveted on the case. But it was not in the interests of the government to provoke such a reaction. The government let the judicial system and the press handle the matter. There is an absolute need to establish the rules of democratic life in our country. In other words, the government has its role to play and the private media organizations have their role to play.

Nation Accused of Violating Human Rights

92AF0767B Algiers LE SOIR D'ALGERIE in French
15 Apr 92 p 2

[Unattributed article: "Comments of the Day: Mr. Ali Yahia Abdenour: 'Algeria in the World Hit Parade of Human Rights Violations'"]

[Text] Mr. Ali Yahia Abdenour, president of the Algerian Human Rights League (LADH) said that Algeria "is in the world hit parade of human rights violations"; he compared the present situation to that which prevailed during the liberation war, and the detention camps to Hitler's.

In an interview with the Spanish newspaper EL MUNDO, published this Sunday, Mr. Ali Yahia Abdenour, answering a question on the current situation in Algeria, indicated that it was "worse" than what we had known during "the French occupation and the war of independence."

"In those days," he said, "there were no concentration camps in the Sahara like those now set up by the current government."

Mr. Ali Yahia Abdenour also appealed to international human rights organizations "to exert pressures" on the Algerian government to persuade it to "close" the concentration camps which he compared to "those of Hitler," and where detainees "are in mortal danger" and live in "subhuman" conditions.

In addition, Maitre Ali Yahia Abdenour, who talked about expeditious detention measures, questioned the figures published by the Algerian authorities concerning the number of detainees and detention camps. He also mentioned "torture" at police stations and stated that "this is the most serious violation of all times."

Consular Services in Oujda Found Lacking

92AF0767C Algiers LE SOIR D'ALGERIE in French
15 Apr 92 p 3

[Article by Miloud Zenasni: "Visit: On the Other Side of the Border"—first two paragraphs are LE SOIR D'ALGERIE introduction]

[Text] Algerians passing through Oujda would hardly suspect for a moment the presence of fellow Algerians living in Morocco, where they form a strong community, as the latter blends every day into this western Moroccan town.

Our presence at the Algerian consulate in this province, at the time of the "Leilat El-Qadr," eventually enabled us to discover the Algerian citizens who live in Morocco, all classes mixed.

Oujda—After the circumcision of Algerian children and the handing over of gifts to needy families on the premises of our consulate, we were able to discuss and gather some news on the situation of our community in this Maghreb country. Merchants, pensioners, notables, students, they were all present on this festive occasion. We should recognize that the Oujda consulate had a bright idea when it took (for the first time) such an initiative. This evening reunion on the 27th day of Ramadan, enabled many Algerians who live in Oujda to get to know one another.

During the discussions, the Algerian community's only concern seemed to be news from the country. This, unfortunately, brought to our attention the lack of Algerian media on Moroccan territory.

And to think that the edification of the Maghreb has to crystallize first through an exchange of information.

Of course, there is our TV channel which broadcasts all the way to Fes but, in the kingdom, our national news are not broadcast during prime time.

What we remember more particularly from these debates among Algerians abroad is the concern of Algerian students who pursue university studies under hard and materially difficult conditions. They do not have scholarships, nor any kind of aid.

Some are seriously considering dropping out. Two students, brothers from a modest family, told us: "Sometimes, we don't even have the few cents we need to make photocopies."

That is the entire drama of these other Algerian young people, who live far from the country, and do not benefit from any of the resources available to their fellow students in Algeria.

Medical studies are also out of the question, as the Oujda university does not have a medical faculty. And, obviously, going to Rabat or Casablanca is impossible, at least for some of them.

Asked about this situation, Mr. Hadj Sadok, the Algerian consul in Oujda, confirmed and acknowledged the students' legitimate concerns. Telling them that he is fully available to serve them, he invited them to get in closer touch and discuss their problems more often.

Moreover, we received confirmation that periodic reports are written and sent to the relevant authorities at home, as the problem of Algerian students in Morocco remains first and foremost an Algerian problem, and one that must be solved with some celerity.

We should note that the Algerian consulate in Oujda has had no respite since the reopening of the border between the two neighboring countries. Initially intended as a public service to our citizens residing in Oujda, the Algerian consulate in this province must face a multitude of problems as the flow of Algerians passing through Oujda increases.

This year only, over 80 passports have been lost and, of course, this required issuing the obligatory passes so people could go back home, which is not an easy task for the consular administration.

In addition, there is the more tragic problem of fatal road accidents.

Transferring the remains of a deceased person takes at least one week because an authorization from the general

consul is mandatory. That triggers a back-and-forth exchange between Oujda and Rabat.

During our visit to Morocco, we learned that five members of the same family had been killed in a road accident at Nador. By a curious twist of fate, that was a collision between two Algerian cars. Speeding seems to have caused the tragedy.

Operating with a reduced staff, the Algerian consulate in Oujda is administratively responsible for districts that are sometimes distant, e.g., Errachidia (600 km), Hoceima (300 km), Taza (250 km), as well as Boulemane and Midelt, where some 10,000 Algerians are disseminated—although taking a census is difficult as some of our citizens live there without identification and report to the consulate only when they are in trouble with Moroccan authorities.

During our stay in Oujda, we watched something strange: Algerian taxis making unceasing round trips between Oujda and Nador, the favored road of international smugglers.

A reliable source told us that taxis, the yellow color of which has become a familiar sight for Moroccans, spend more time in Morocco than in Algeria. It looks as if taxi licenses, supposedly issued to provide a public service in Algeria, merely become part of the vast and profitable sector of Trans-Maghreb "trabendo."

In this respect, we learned that a Moroccan taxi cannot cross Moroccan borders without an authorization from the Moroccan Ministry of Transport. We must admit that freedom is something that we, Algerians, know how to take full advantage of.

On the way back home, we wondered at the endless line of "tourists" about to return to [as published] Morocco, although the dinar is exchanged for a miserable 0.16 dirhams on the streets of Oujda.

UMA [Arab Maghreb Union] countries have their work cut out for them if they want to build an economically strong and balanced Maghreb.

Youth: Factors in Espousing Islam Discussed

92AF0766A Algiers *L'OBSERVATEUR* in French
22-28 Apr 92 pp 24-25

[Article by Ghania Khelifi: "Youth and Islam: Manipulation or Choice?"—first paragraph is *L'OBSERVATEUR* introduction]

[Text] If there is one group in society that is clamoring to communicate, it is indeed the Algerian youth. This desire to talk is not lost on everybody; some have used and abused it in their power struggle with the government and civilian society. Frightened by the formidable energy potential of this youth, disarmed by its helplessness, we are quick to decree that youth is extremist and Islamist, and to pronounce other simplifying judgments. But why not let youth decide what it wants to become?

For, indeed, this is its main demand. A majority force in the country, youth now demands that it should participate in building a project of modern and democratic society. This is also the main fact that emerges from the survey on youth and Islam conducted by the CENEAP [expansion not given] in a sample of 10,000 young people from all backgrounds. Islamists? No. But they might become Islamists if we do not start a dialogue with them. As Mrs. Kharfi Mezouane, a CENEAP researcher, convincingly pointed out, Algeria is a young country that is above all a young people's country. Let's then ponder their answers.

Algeria treats its youth like a monolithic and homogeneous body sharing the same interests and reacting in the same manner to the phenomena that pass through it. According to sociologists, this already is a manipulation.

This tendency to lump all young people together became particularly obvious where the Islamist movement was concerned. For instance, the Islamist phenomenon is supposed to run through the Algerian youth, eliciting similar reactions of similar intensity. However, if there is a social body that we should beware of labeling, it is indeed youth.

A shifting body if there ever was one, in search of itself and the others, living through its own contradictions and those of its environment, youth is composed of as many specific characteristics and categories as society. The latter, in a constant state of upheaval, does not always listen to, or answer this youth that is burdensome through its numbers, dangerous through its impatience, and demanding through its aspirations. We have also been much mistaken regarding its aspirations. For a long time, this failure of the civilian society and the government left the field open to a hardline reasoning that could capture and channel young people's energy and their desire for change to obtain their illusory—or real?—participation in a society project, in government. The Islamist movement, with the FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) at its head, gave young people a chance to get involved in political activity, to take up responsibilities in building a society project. Can you imagine what it means for an unemployed 20-year-old to become the

imam of a mosque in his neighborhood or an "emir"? This changed the attitude of young people toward religion. It crystallized all of society's crises. Young people began to see Islam as the blue-chip security, the new expression of their identity, as well as the quest for new civilization landmarks, an ideal transcending the nation and revealing the crisis of nationalism. But is Algerian youth fundamentalist? Are young Algerians the vectors of a society project of the "dawla islamia" [Islamic government] type, governed by the strict application of the shari'ah?

The answer or answers are to be found in the CENEAP survey on "Youth and Islam." The CENEAP observations are the result of several polls and a national survey of the Algerian youth. These considerations should also lead to sociological criteria and a more exact knowledge of youth. The survey shows that in discussing a number of questions related to the society project they advocate, young people react differently depending on their education level, their social background, their sex, etc.

The first observation is that the relationship between the young and Islam is marked by an ideologically charged reasoning that is not necessarily a return to an authentic Islamic culture. Religious prohibitions are brandished like the foundations of Islam and have become the symbols of theological knowledge. Young people do not seem too well versed in Islamic science and tend to focus on outer signs, such as wearing "kamis," beards, etc. They express their adhesion to the Islamist society project through outward signs, attitudes, and practices that have more to do with what is called Islamism than with Islam. And it is these outward and sometimes spectacular signs that lead people to believe that the youth supports the Islamist project. Actually, 40 percent of young people believe that Islam and politics could coexist in a single project and that the State can govern by applying the shari'ah, although most of them consider that the shari'ah can be applied only in stages. On the other hand, more young people—about 44 percent—believe that Islam and politics should be separated.

Adhesion to this type of society where religion and politic go hand in hand also varies according to the education level. Answers to this question were as follows:

Islam and Politics

Education level	Should be separated	Should Go Together	No Opinion
Illiterate	37.5%	24.4%	38.1%
Primary/Middle	46.2%	38.1%	15.7%
Secondary	43.6%	51.4%	4.9%
Higher	31.4%	63.7%	4.9%

The higher the educational level, the greater the young people's interest for Islamist values and practices. In other words, the longer young people remain in the educational system, the stronger their adhesion to the Islamist project.

The first very important observation is the emergence of schools as an undeniable vector in the dissemination and propagation of Islamic culture. More than mosques, schools seem to be a training place for the Islamic project. The obvious conclusion is that it is no use to target mosques

alone—which should be restored to their true functions—but that the school system is in need of serious and well thought-out reforms as far as programs, personnel, teaching methods, etc., are concerned, and that, at last, the society project it is supposed to promote should be defined.

This is all the more necessary as the Islamist movement did not complete its takeover at school level. As far as the family is concerned, it is done with it and now transcends it. Depending on whether they consider their father or their mother, from 30 to 60 percent of the young people estimate that they practice their religion better than their parents.

We have all witnessed around us conflicts opposing parents and children on the subject of religious practice. This translates into "massive" attendance at the mosque without necessarily resulting in an adhesion to Islamism. Nearly two-thirds of the young people polled see such assiduity at the mosque as an expression of faith.

This leads us to another observation that contradicts the common belief that young people's social and economic circumstances alone account for their enrolment in the Islamist movement.

The following data link the father's education level and the youth's adhesion to the Islamist project:

Illiterate father	38.9%
Koranic school	43%
Primary school	40%
Secondary school	42%
Higher education	44%

Again, it seems that young people whose father (or guardian) has a higher education are more likely to choose an Islamist society project. Young Islamists do not necessarily come from an illiterate and disadvantaged background. On the other hand, the following percentages confirm that the center of the country is the leading region for "Islamism":

Center	45%
East	38%
West	36%
South	26%

The legislative elections had already yielded a few indications on the localization of Islamism. The Islamist project finds a greater audience in an urban than in a rural environment, in metropolitan than in peripheral areas.

Finally, more (75 percent) young people under 25 identify with an Islamist-type project.

The perceptions and practices of adhesion to this project as a whole are not only experienced as the materialization of a series of identifying or cultural values, but above all as a moral or ethical code that is synonymous with justice, social justice, honor, honesty, solidarity.... Like all religions, Islam is also a moral code and its attitudes reflect the need to make society moral through Islam, and to restore the values on which Islam is based. This need for moral values appears in the young people's answers to the question: "What has the most value in your eyes?" For 81.2 percent of young people,

moral qualities are what they consider most important, ahead of success, money, and power.

Nevertheless, we should note a singular fact. The fact that, constitutionally speaking, Islam is the State religion does not seem to be taken into consideration. When reminded of the fact, the young people's direct and unanimous answer is: "If Islam were truly the State religion, there would have been no corruption, 'hogra' [scorn, contempt], the 26 billion, etc." Wearing a beard, a "kamis" becomes a way of self-assertion, of "social usefulness."

The youth marks his difference with respect to the society he is dreaming to change; he also displays his "moral integrity" and his "cleanliness" of new Algerian Muslim.

Another thing we should note concerning Algerian youth is the moderate attitude of young women. For instance, 50 percent of those polled ascribed the infatuation of young people with mosques to the cultural void, the lack of leisure [occupations], and the imitation factor. Their views on wearing the hijab are also more finely shaded: 52 percent wear it as a sign of compliance with the precepts of Islam; 16 percent wear it because of family pressure; 14 percent think it does not mean a thing; and 18 percent see it as a matter of imitation and fashion.

Starting with these observations on young people categorized as "vectors of an Islamist society project," we would have expected them to have logical extensions in social and cultural spheres other than those relating to religion. Curiously enough, however, these young people's opinions on a number of modern concepts did not show any striking singularities. As far as women—the focus of all Islamist talk—are concerned, attitudes are quite surprising and do not quite match what we assumed we knew about the Islamist youth. Let's look at the figures.

Should a woman be allowed to work outside?	
Yes	75%
No	23%
No opinion	1.9%
In what type of environment should a woman be allowed to work?	
Female environment	52%
Mixed environment	45%
No opinion	2.6%
Is it preferable that she should be educated?	
Yes	95.4%
No	4.6%
Should she be allowed to choose her husband?	
Yes	88.2%
No	11.8%
Are you in favor of coeducational sports?	
No	65.6%
Yes	28%
No opinion	6.3%

Concerning sports, 98 percent said they were ready to practice some.

Another indication that contradicts the fundamentalist trend of a fringe of society is the attitude toward contraception.

Are you in favor of:	
Limiting the number of births	21.5%
Spacing out births	44.2%
Limiting and spacing out births	25.9%
Neither	8.3%

Through these few observations we may safely conclude that the majority of Algerian youth does not adhere to an Islamist-type society project, and that it is far from being a fundamentalist mass opposed to any modern concept. However, it so happens that it is the Islamist fringe of the fundamentalist trend that succeeds in making its voice heard, and sometimes in imposing it. The unrest at the university, especially at Bab-Ezzouar, was caused by a minority that was active while most students were affected by what happened without finding a channel to express their feelings of helplessness. This edging out of the majority also manifests itself in the reasoning directed at young people. Not all young people are idle, delinquent, or "trabendists." Young people who intend to change things, who struggle every day to achieve a modern society relieved from its present burdens, have the right not only to be listened to, but also to get involved in any social project. Youth remains an important stake in the open or veiled struggles that are tearing the country apart. However, when it comes to young people, neither side can be sure of anything and this is perhaps where hope—or danger—lies if the government does not implement a genuine youth policy that would take into account the specific characteristics and problems of the various groups of young people. Nothing has been lost yet, but nothing has been gained either.

All young people, irrespective of the society project they favor, unanimously answered "no" to the question: "Do you enjoy being young?" What does it mean to enjoy being young if not to believe in tomorrow and contribute to one's future?

Ghozali Plan To Improve Housing Said Inadequate

92AF0761B *Algiers HEBDO LIBERE in French*
22-28 Apr 92 p 7

[Unattributed article]

[Text] As far as housing is concerned, the Ghozali government's recovery plan provides that 100,000 subsidized housing units will be built during 1992 and 1993, plus another 140,000 in real-estate developments. It also contemplates building 60,000 development and 40,000 subsidized housing units that were included in the previous plan but were never started. To achieve this, the

government intends to import a lot more cement, lumber, and steel. It has earmarked \$900 million to import building materials. Actually, a major constraint handicaps the building and civil engineering sector, the supply of building materials is inadequate, and this is one of several essential factors that make for longer completion times.

The government's recovery plan first gives priority to subsidized housing. In particular, the completion of 60,000 subsidized housing units in 1992 is one of the program's objectives. The plan also contemplates instituting a renting policy and adopting regulations favorable to such a choice.

The importance currently attached to subsidized housing is in sharp contrast with the Hamrouche government's policy. The latter, by setting up a system of aid to provide access to subsidized housing—which paradoxically used discriminatory criteria—deprived most Algerians of the possibility of obtaining decent housing.

Actually, because of the devaluation of the dinar and the erosion of their purchasing power, few Algerians are in a position to make a 20-percent down payment on a home and devote part of their monthly salaries to pay the remainder. A mere F3 apartment now costs between 600,000 and 700,000 Algerian dinars.

Does the Ghozali government intend to revise the criteria of access to subsidized housing? The plan does not mention such a possibility. Note also that achieving the recovery plan objectives hinges on the availability of outside financing. To import additional quantities of cement, lumber, and steel—in addition to semifinished products and durable goods—we must have access to foreign credits. But the availability of loans from creditor countries is subject to the conditions they impose. Depending on the cases, it is subject to IMF conditions, to political conditions (stability, respect for democracy), or to financial conditions (guarantees).

The plan is inadequate in another respect: it is not the result of a consultation, hence it perceives only part of the problems and solutions to the housing crisis. In particular, the question of cement overconsumption is not considered. Because there are no consumption standards and because locally available materials are not used enough, a lot of cement is used in the building trade. Underskilled labor, ill-considered projects, the unrestricted trend toward excessively expensive buildings, these are a few causes leading to the wasting of cement. The shortage is made worse by the restrictions imposed on would-be producers of building materials and by the effects of economic failure—the inadequate use of cement-works production capacities, due both to internal causes and exogenous factors (procurement). The slow rate at which production units for substitute materials (sand-and-limestone bricks, polished stones, BTS [expansion not given]) are completed is another factor promoting cement overconsumption.

In this respect, the plan makes no mention of the participation of specialists to tackle the housing crisis, the assistance of architects in designing projects that take into account both aesthetic and economic criteria, and State regulations applying to construction by private owners and real-estate developers. Placing restrictions on the devaluation of the dinar, which compounds the increase of construction costs, lifting the constraints on the purchase of building lots, revising laws and taxation pertaining to housing, instituting favorable bank rates, and being fair in allocating housing units, these are the ways to solve the housing shortage.

According to many citizens, "the housing crisis is deliberate." Favoritism is almost as common as ever. And the obstacles to obtaining housing remain nearly insuperable. Actually, the State's determination to solve the housing crisis is countered by its inconsistent housing policy and a series of handicaps that paralyze any efforts to alleviate the phenomenon. The relevant and ready-made solutions of the specialists and contractors clash with the slow reaction to the scope of the problem. The demand is for about 200,000 housing units by the end of the decade; but building capacities are estimated to be 100,000 units. As economic problems increase, the hopes of the disadvantaged and the middle class to acquire a home vanish. The suffering of hundreds of thousands of citizens living in promiscuity or sharing precarious housing contrasts with the State voluntarism, the ambiance of bureaucracy, and the official near-inertia.

This situation excuses any excesses and any resentment toward the government. The "Australian dream" of the youth is the immediate result of the lack of new ideas foisted upon the Algerians by decisionmakers during the eighties. Today, the same mistakes are being made, thus condemning us to bury our needs and our dreams in our immense disappointment. Or to despair of our government. Unless....

'Terrorist' Group on Violence, Affiliation

92AF0762B *Algiers HEBDO LIBERE in French*
22-28 Apr 92 pp 16-17

[Article by K. Ben: "Meeting With a Terrorist Group"; first three paragraphs are HEBDO LIBERE introduction]

[Text] Our reporter talked with "Emir" Abou Hassan (Djeich Errassoul) who claimed responsibility for several acts of terrorism.

Driven back to a position where they are mere killers whose actions arouse only fear and reprobation among a shocked population, terrorist groups related to the Islamic movement are trying to loosen the noose and catch their breath through newspapers they believe will serve them to express their views. To this end, they contacted our reporter so as to pose before the public as an organized force capable of exploits worthy of Robin Hood.

The Islamic movement thus shows that it can use the media weapon with virtuosity; and the interview that follows is an exercise that proves, if needed, that the independence claim by these groups of killers poorly conceals a powerful national, perhaps even international, organization.

Already in May 1991, Abassi Madani alluded to it... "The Prophet's army, the historical army..." with which "the people would fight the army until it was destroyed...." Today, "this army" exists; it claims responsibility for all or some of the attacks against security forces (the ANP [People's National Army], the gendarmerie, and the police) since the beginning of 1992. We met people who claim to belong to one of its factions.... Here is the story....

Larbaa, or the Eternal New Beginning

Thursday 16 April. Larbaa. A large village at the base of foothills that mark the horizon and over which a line of heavy black cumulonimbuses pile up, warning of an impending storm. A town that developed haphazardly, with mosques being built next to household appliance stores, a shambles heaped with rejects from Taiwan and Korea. Larbaa. A town strangely cursed with the inability to wake up from its secular apathy, except through Islamism in its most exacerbated manifestations. This the region which, in his time, Bouyali Mustapha chose to become one of the meccas of the "Islamic revolution," with numerous places to hide men and equipment (weapons, explosives, pamphlets, etc.). That was in 1985. Seven years later, this small corner of the Mitidja where the soil wages an unequal battle against the inexorable advance of concrete is again in the lime-light, at the center of what has been macabrely named the "death triangle."

As a sign of defiance (or because it was convenient), this is the place where our "contacts," after much tergiversation concerning security, told us to meet them.

Meeting in a J5

At 1300, near the post office, the streets were crawling with people, the traffic was intense. We waited. Examining passersby, we tried to guess which of these anonymous faces would be that of our future interviewee. Nothing happened. The agonizing possibility that the meeting might be canceled crossed our mind. This passing fit of anxiety vanished when a man approached us and told us to follow him. Briefly, he explained that the place was "not quite safe yet"; we must be careful and wait patiently a few hundred meters farther, in a cheap rotisserie. This forced meal did not last long. Our guide came back and beckoned us to follow him. We did as we were told and ended up behind a J5-type vehicle parked between two other "public transport vehicles," in a parking spot marked as such. He drummed a code on the door, which opened after a short while to let us in.

Three Hooded Men

Inside. Three men, their heads covered with thick ribbed-knit brown hoods, leather pilot jackets, jeans, sneakers. The first one, while apologizing, searched us...with quick, precise movements of one hand only, the other hand holding a Kalashnikov, the barrel pointed upward, the magazine engaged. The second individual, sitting cross-legged on the floor of the van, a pistol by his right knee, asked us in a low voice to sit facing him, on an upturned lemonade crate serving as a seat. The third and last member of the group remained in the back and obviously acted as a "recorder." After this long and cautious ceremonial with the triple purpose of convincing us that this was an organized, armed, underground group, the interview could begin. The man sitting in front of us introduced himself as Emir Abou Hassan, in charge of a battalion from "Djeich Errassoul," and said he was prepared to answer all our questions, adding however that, as a matter of protection, our meeting could not last longer than 20 minutes. We then immediately started with an "insidious" question. Who were they? Were they affiliated to an existing political party?

"Apart from personal details, we may say that we are a group of militants who have chosen the armed way to overthrow the government of the tyrants who, for over 30 years, have victimized, repressed, and murdered the children of the Muslim people of Algeria... We started to act back on 22 June 1991 when, after consulting with and taking the advice of the jurists and the ulemas, we decided to start the jihad. We are not affiliated to any party, as we believe that our brothers in Islam, who have chosen the way of political struggle, are making a mistake; we are convinced—and what is happening to the FIS today proves—that we cannot negotiate or deal with the miscreant despots who oppress us."

Are they responsible for the acts of terrorism that took place during the entire first quarter of 1992?

"Through a communique, which the press did not publish, we claimed responsibility for some of these acts which you call 'terrorist attacks'; as for us, we reject this term, but we are not surprised to see it used in connection with us, as all those who have fought for a just cause have been called that, from the mujahid of the national liberation war to the children of the intifadah..."

But the latter are not killing innocent police officials who are just doing their jobs and who... Obviously exasperated, "our" Emir interrupted...

"On what kind of battlefield do people ask the troops who face them whether they are good men, good fathers, honest or respectable? Every war makes innocent victims, the jihad is not an easy way..."

Look at What Is Happening in Afghanistan!

But this makes their "fight" useless and hopeless, as the overwhelming majority of the people will condemn and disapprove such actions...

"What do you know about the people? What people are you talking about? The people of Mercedes's and mansions, of millionaire thieves who sucked our blood, or the people who suffer in silence, our people? We are convinced that we are only forerunners; the day is near when the whole people will take up arms; if we are to be the first martyrs, so be it and we are proud of it... As for whether our fight is hopeless, I advise you to look at what our brothers in Afghanistan are doing. They have vanquished the Red Army, the communists' army, and this very day, as I am talking to you, they are kicking out the last lackeys." This statement was accompanied by a double and guttural "Allah u Akbar" [God is great] from the "lookout" and the "recorder" who until then had remained silent.

Didn't Boudiaf's arrival change their point of view?

"Quite to the contrary! Since his arrival, repression has been intensified; camps have been opened in the South, and our brothers deported there. How could we trust that man, who holds out his hand to you and stabs you in the back? How could we believe in that man, who comes in and calls for Zionist-controlled foreign banks to come and buy the country piecemeal, who pledges allegiance to the murderers of the Iraqi people. We reject him fully; we believe that all he does is take someone else's place at the banquet table." We then could not help mentioning again the odious nature of some acts, for instance against policeman Ammi Salah...

"We firmly denounce and condemn the politician's exploitation of a number of situations. True 'violence' is when the government shows the policemen's families in tears, or the policemen's burial on television; what do these people know about the grief of families? We can testify to it; it is the same grief as that of the mothers, fathers, and sisters of our brothers who are falling while fighting and were not even given the consideration given to animals; we despise people who use such 'violence.' Also, there is something else we want you to know: we know that we are not the only ones in the field; other brothers have chosen the same way..."

Al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah?...

"In particular, and others; they are many; we also know that there are things going on now that we do not yet understand, people are paid by 'foreigners' to execute policemen or other officials; these people do not come from our ranks, they do it only for money; according to our information, killing a policeman is worth 50,000 dinars; these same people sell the weapons they recover, whenever we can, we eliminate these people who give a bad name to our fight..."

"Foreigners?" A "plot being hatched?"

"Yes, but we do not have any precise information, this is difficult for us under present circumstances, but we are trying to learn more. What I can tell you is that they speak French with a strong English accent."

And...

Visibly worried, the Emir did not allow us to continue our questions...

"Sorry, we cannot go on any longer; we shall contact you again..."

Furtive handshakes; the door of the JS opened again; we were outside again...

Unasked questions were rushing through our head; by the time we had lit the cigarette we were craving, the van had started with no sign of being in a rush... a few minutes later, a slow-moving police patrol vehicle drove a few feet from us... Only then did we notice the convulsive shaking of our knees...

[Box, p 17 (handwritten)]

Army of Prophet Muhammad—Copy of Communiqué No. 2 Addressed to the Press

We, army of the Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him.

We inform you that all that is currently occurring (deaths and attacks, etc.) is just by way of a warning.

Our activities are specially directed against the criminals of June 1991 and January-February 1992, and against the mafia that rules Algeria, not against the people, or national unity, or state-owned or private businesses, but against people who hide under uniforms and those who stole the wealth of the people and the state, and the case of the 26 [m/b]illion [as published], who are speaking in the name of democracy and national union in order to mislead public opinion.

We most severely warn the men who are going to sit on the Consultative Commission.

But [as for] the states that will give their aid to the HCE [High State Committee], such as Belgium, Italy, and France, etc., we are quite ready to kidnap their citizens and their families, and this [sic] after denying the letter that was transmitted to us on this subject, warn you to take into consideration everything that we say; otherwise, it will be a disaster.

First Official Meeting of FIS Abroad Noted

92AF0766B Algiers EL WATAN in French
27 Apr 92 p 3

[Article signed A.M.: "FIS (Islamic Salvation Front): The French 'Staging Post'"]

[Text] Pending a decision that may prove fatal to it—the dissolution process has reached an advanced stage—did the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] decide to make the first move and redeploy elsewhere, namely in France?

Will the French state serve as a staging post for a party whose political activity is now challenged in its own

country? Many are sure of it, considering that the "first FIS meeting outside of Algeria" was organized in Roubaix on Sunday.

The public rally that was authorized by the French Government was attended by about 500 people, including some 100 women; it was led by Anouar Haddam, an FIS militant known for his activism in the Tlemcen area. Therefore, a private hall in Roubaix was used for a political meeting at which Anouar Haddam ardently attacked the new Algerian Government, predicting a "popular uprising." While a photo exhibition showing scenes of torture in Algeria was held in the hall entrance, the speaker called for "international pressure to liberate Algeria."

This meeting, according to observers, went off peacefully, with the police watching very discreetly.

Note that this is the first "official" FIS event abroad. The French Government's support confirms to some extent information according to which the FIS enjoys certain facilities to pursue its activities.

This support also comes at a time when, according to LIBERATION, FIS leaders who have gone underground have obtained without too many difficulties residence permits enabling them to stay in France. Should we then believe that France, which the FIS was censuring yesterday, has become a "sanctuary" for a party looking for any compromise that will ensure its survival?

Besides, the FIS, which is going through a decisive stage of its existence, was given a "reprieve" yesterday as far as the question of its dissolution is concerned. In fact, according to the party lawyer, Maitre Brahim Touati, the Algiers Supreme Court decided to postpone until next Wednesday its decision on the appeal filed by the FIS following the dissolution decree issued against it on 4 March by the Administrative Chamber of the Algiers Court. As is known, the Supreme Court decision will be without appeal, which implies that this is the FIS's last shot at retaining administrative legality.

In addition, in an interview published Saturday by the daily ESSALEM, Rabah Kebir, now under house arrest, implicitly denied that the FIS had called for violence.

"According to my information," Mr. Kebir, who is also in charge of the Islamist formation's foreign relations, added, "the latest FIS communiqué is not a call to violence, but a call to struggle so as not to be edged out." "All that is posted or published does not necessarily come from the FIS and is the sole responsibility of those who post or publish it," Kebir also said.

Asked about the links between the underground bulletin MINBAR EL-DJOU MOUA and the FIS, he declared that the bulletin "in no way expresses" the FIS official position.

Press Reaction to Beloucif Investigation

92AF0761A Algiers EL WATAN in French
30 Apr 92 p 2

[Article signed R.N.: "Generals' Report; Press Reactions"]

[Text] The publication, last Monday in EL WATAN, of an ANP [People's National Army] investigation commission's conclusions concerning retired Major General Mostefa Beloucif, in 1989, is still causing a stir.

Our fellow newspapers' interpretations of this information remain varied, not to say conflicting. While some of them merely printed the reactions of the Ministry of National Defense [MDN] and Maj. Gen. Mostefa Beloucif's lawyer, others, on the contrary, made theirs the major general and his lawyer's position that this was a "settling of scores" and a "manipulation."

These newspapers consider that, in view of the country's present situation, now is not the right time to divulge corruption cases; some, like the editor of the FLN [National Liberation Front] newspaper, EL MOUDJAHID, even presume to lecture us on deontology.

According to the daily LE MATIN, "... everything seems to indicate that Beloucif's trial would also be the trial of Chadli and his associates; besides, the major general threatened to 'lay files open'; and further: "...the publication of the report elicited various reactions in army circles. Some believe that this is an internal problem, which would have been better handled within the army, so as to avoid the risk of smearing the entire military institution. Others, however, consider that solving these problems openly can only boost the credibility of the military institution, which is not a foreign body in society."

ALGER REPUBLICAIN reproduced the MDN communique, to which it added excerpts from Maj. Gen. Beloucif's statement to QUOTIDIEN D'ALGERIE and his lawyer's statement, which indicates that his client "has already been the subject of an investigation that was closed with an order referring the case to the military tribunal."

In an editorial signed by its editor, the FLN daily, EL MOUDJAHID, wrote that "we do not have the right to have individuals judged by the media and public opinion before they are judged by the courts. As for those who are behind these highly publicized and shocking operations, or who echo them and perform this kind of dirty work, contrary to what they believe or pretend they are not serving democracy, or liberty, or the rule of law, or justice, or moral, or the most elementary principles of ethics and deontology...which we intend to shield from all those who would pervert politics and the media."

For Kamal Belkacem, editor of QUOTIDIEN D'ALGERIE: "...once he had left the government, last 11 January...Chadli became the one choice target of many opponents who suddenly realized that, deep down, they

had always wanted to clean up things.... More recent cases have shown that the presumption of innocence was valid both for an alleged terrorist and for a general or a fallen minister. Especially because the present political climate... does not make it a good time to wash in public the dirty linen of all those who, directly or indirectly, benefited from the dividends and privileges of previous governments."

For its part, LE SOIR D'ALGERIE wrote that "...in this new bit of scandal, can we believe and hope that there is not a hint of a settling of scores?"

"...In view of present conditions, this is not the right time, either politically or socially and economically.... A witch hunt and the settling of scores can in no way benefit the country."

Natural Gas Exports to Portugal Discussed

92AF0761C Algiers EL WATAN in French
30 Apr 92 p 2

[Unattributed article: "Natural Gas: Algerian-Portuguese Negotiations"]

[Text] The Portuguese secretary of state to energy, Mr. Luis Filipe Pereira, left Algiers yesterday after a three-day visit during which he met, among others, Mr. Nordine Ait Laoussine, minister of energy.

This visit essentially concerned the planned export of Algerian natural gas to Portugal, which would enable that country to start using gas as a source of energy. Concerning the quantity and conditions of implementation of the contract, Mr Pereira told the APS that "since the project is entrusted to a Portuguese firm, most of which is privately owned, with the State holding only a 10-percent interest, the Portuguese Government does not have to discuss prices with Algerian authorities."

The negotiations with representatives of the energy sector, therefore, involved mostly the conditions of delivery of the gas, as "this project is closely tied to the construction of a thermal power plant that should start production by 1996," according to Mr. Pereira.

The other subject discussed with the Algerian partners was the West Maghreb-Europe gas pipeline, as Portugal is currently chairing the EEC. According to Mr. Pereira, "this gas pipeline is of paramount importance for EEC countries whose natural gas supplies come from non-EEC countries"; he also indicated that "the gas supplied to EEC countries comes, on the one hand, from the north gas pipeline that crosses, in particular, the former USSR and Norway, and from the south gas pipeline through Algeria." When asked whether Portugal intends to intensify its relations with Algeria in connection with oil and gas, in view of the dual advantage of the geographic closeness of the two countries and the recognized quality of Algerian oil, Mr. Pereira pointed out that "for Portugal, the diversification of its energy sources is a top priority."

Increased Violence, 'Terrorist' Acts Feared

92AF0762A Algiers EL WATAN in French
30 Apr 92 p 3

[Article signed R.B.: "The Consequences of a Ban"]

[Text] The dissolution of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], ordered on 4 March by the Algiers Court after 31 months of legal existence, was just confirmed by the Supreme Court. Faced with this Supreme Court decision, which is without appeal, FIS lawyers, according to Maitre Brahim Taouti, might take the case to the UN Human Rights Commission, which guarantees the civil and political rights of organizations recognized by the signatories of the human rights convention, like Algeria.

According to the lawyers, this, which after all is a symbolical gesture, might be followed by a request for the judge to reverse his decision. To do that, however, they would have to manage to recover documents which—the defense lawyers say—have disappeared from the file. This seems unlikely to occur, essentially considering the government's determination to be done with the FIS. This was also confirmed by Mr. Boudiaf who stated that the Constitution was about to be revised so as not to allow the creation of parties and organizations based on religion. Already, however, one cannot fail to wonder about the future of the FIS militant and sympathizer rank and file.

Actually, since party activities were banned several months ago, the FIS has practically gone underground. Simultaneously, and especially since the cancellation of the first round of legislative elections, a revival of terrorism has taken place, which was also legitimized and justified by the underground FIS, as represented by Abderrezak Redjam, who is currently on the run. On the eve of the Supreme Court's decision, a terrorist attack took the life of the Ksar El-Boukhari district police chief.

It was observed that the ban against all FIS political activity was immediately followed by terrorist attacks.

A Climate of Violence?

Well-informed circles have accused "Afghan" groups of being behind these attacks, especially the attack against the Guemmar barracks. Similarly, after condemning the authors of the latter, it will be necessary [sic] other terrorist attacks that might be organized by individuals currently wanted and on the run. This, in sum, is a phase of violence that may become worse in the next few days, as the government seems determined not to yield in this power struggle that pits it against the FIS.

In addition to attacks, violence could also take other forms if we are to believe the statement broadcast by the Islamic Unions coordinators, which are also not officially recognized. Actually, the statement claimed that the prevailing situation might cause a widespread popular outburst in the next few days. These unions also blamed the government's economic plan, which "aims to westernize Muslim Algeria," and announced that "the

end of the government is near." After calling workers to oppose "colonialism from inside and from outside," the unions stated that the only solution would be for the country to "return to political legitimacy and respect for the people's choice," i.e., the legislative elections. The unions went so far as to warn the authorities in case their claims are not met. They will then have "recourse to other means to wrest their rights." That leads to the assumption that Islamic unions are considering a reenactment of the political strike of last May-June.

It is clear that, now that the FIS is banned, Islamist or Islamist-related formations will attempt to invade the FIS preserves.

HAMAS and al-Nahdah will be the first to attempt to fill the void left by the FIS dissolution.

In fact, we may assume that many FIS militants and sympathizers are not prepared to follow all the way an organization that is now outlawed. Other political formations, which were never hostile to the FIS, might be tempted to try and take over the FIS rank and file.

Railway Accord Signed With India

BK0205095492 Delhi All India Radio Network
in English 0245 GMT 2 May 92

[Text] India and Algeria have signed an agreement for cooperation in the field of railways. It was signed in New Delhi yesterday between the railway minister, Mr. C.K. Jaffer Sherief and the visiting Algerian minister of transportation and communications, Mr. Hachemi Nait Djoudi. An official release said the decisions of the third meeting of the Indo-Algerian working group on railways on extending Indian cooperation in updating and modernizing the Algerian railways was endorsed. Dr. Nait Djoudi also called on the prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, and held brief discussions.

New Commander of 2d Military District Installed

LD0305202392 Algiers ETV Television Network
in Arabic 1900 GMT 3 May 92

[Excerpt] Maj. Gen. Abdelmalek Guenaizia, commander of the National People's Army General Staff, this morning installed Brigadier General Salah Ahmed Kaid at the head of the 2d military district. The ceremony took place at the headquarter of the 2d military district in Oran. [passage omitted. TV reporter says that the new commander replaces Brig. Khalifa Rahim, who earlier was appointed commander of the land forces]

Oil Company To Enter Into Foreign Partnership

LD1305150392 Algiers APS in English 1113 GMT
13 May 92

[Text] Algiers—The Algerian public company Sonatrach [National Hydrocarbons Company], has signed two new contracts of research in hydrocarbons with an American company, at a time [word indistinct]

has started negotiations with 18 international [companies] interested in investing in existing oil fields, as this is allowed by Algerian legislation. These negotiations are the result of a debate about opening oil fields to foreign capital—which has long been considered taboo—and of a more serene action after the People's National Assembly's adoption of the new law on hydrocarbons last November. This new approach started on 4 July 1991, when the new head of government, Sid Ahmed Ghazali, who was presenting his program before the People's National Assembly, announced the main axis of his energy policy, where oil becomes the major asset to bring the country out of an unprecedented financial crisis. This sentence was however unnoticed: "To get out of the infernal circle of indebtedness, I am ready to sell a part of Hassi-Messaoud" [oil field].

The shock effect that the head of government had expected did not happen. Fifteen days later, he expressed the same idea in an interview to a Belgian newspaper. What was "a metaphor" became "the bomb of Hassi-Messaoud." It was a question of "the sale" of the biggest oil field in Algeria, and even of a "discount sale" of the country. The government later explained that it was not a sale of wells, but foreign capital participation in increasing production and reserves that Sonatrach, because of the lack of financial and technological means, can not accomplish. The idea was that only foreign partners, with their huge capacities, can help Algeria get the maximum oil from its wells. The quantities to be recovered are estimated by Ghazali at "\$150 billion that are sleeping underground". It was then necessary to explain that the operation would concern all the wells, and not only Hassi-Messaoud, and that it can generate considerable sums of money (\$4 to 6 billion) in the form of anticipated sale of oil and "right of entry" to oil fields that the interested companies must pay before starting exploration.

When all was said and done, the government easily managed to make the National People's Assembly adopt the amendments to the 1986 Law on Hydrocarbons. In view of the new text, foreign companies could directly take part in the production and the development of deposits already discovered, with a 51-percent participation of Sonatrach. At the same time, Sonatrach abandoned its monopoly on transportation. Other important news: for the first time, the exploration of gas deposits is open to foreign capital, while research and exploration will be encouraged through more incentives and invitations for bids, which are smoother and less expensive than mutual agreements. According to experts, Algeria will have to drill around 100 wells per year (there were only 25 in 1991) to increase its reserves, if it wants to avoid the risk of becoming an oil importer by the beginning of the next century. Since the adoption of the law, Sonatrach intensified its contacts with about 20 international oil companies that will, within two months, pay several field visits to 10 different wells.

There are Japanese, French, Italian, Norwegian, Danish, and Canadian companies, among which are Agip, Total,

Japan National Oil Corporation and Occidental Petroleum. Starting from 15 January, these companies enjoyed a 3-month time limit to submit their offers [word indistinct] engaging negotiations for potential contracts. This was the case on last 30 April for 18 companies. According to sources from Sonatrach, invitations to tender bids for more than 10 wells are being prepared. Moreover, the Algerian recoverable crude oil reserves are estimated at 700 million tons, i.e., a 20-year lifespan. The additional quantities from the intervention of the foreign capital, estimated at 450 million tons, will prolong the lifespan of the national reserves 12 times over. As to natural gas reserves, they are estimated at 3,000 billion cubic meters and were exploited at only 10 to 15 per cent. In the same vein, in 1991, Algeria exported 52 million tons equivalent oil (m/teo) of liquid hydrocarbons (crude oil, condensate and liquid natural gas, liquefied propane, and refined products) for 52.6 m/teo in 1990. During the same year, it exported 13.2 m/teo of natural gas and 19 m/teo of liquified natural gas for 11.3 m/teo and 18.6 m/teo, respectively, in 1990.

Detained FIS Leaders Refuse To Meet With ICRC

LD1405141792 *Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic*
1200 GMT 14 May 92

[Text] The International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC] confirmed yesterday that the detained leaders of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] have refused to meet a delegation of the committee.

The committee pointed out that the FIS leaders have justified that by their adherence to the political prisoners' law.

New Pipeline To Supply Gas to Italy

LD1605093892 *Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic*
2200 GMT 15 May 92

[Text] Starting in October 1994, Italy will be supplied with Algerian natural gas through a new pipeline that connects Hasi R'Mel with Bologna in northern Italy via the Strait of Sicily, and passes through Tunisian territory.

The new pipeline will increase the annual quantity of natural gas exported to Italy from the current 12 billion cubic meters to 24 billion cubic meters, and could reach 30 billion cubic meters. The new pipeline project will cost about \$6 billion.

Sonatrach Releases Statement on Oil Fields

LD1705222192 *Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic* 1900 GMT 17 May 92

["Press statement" by the Algerian National Company for the Transport and Marketing of Hydrocarbons (SONATRACH)—read by announcer]

[Excerpts] Sonatrach [National Hydrocarbons Company] received replies in April 1992 to last November's preliminary bids to improve conditions for exploiting currently-producing oil fields. [passage omitted]

Of the 20 companies that applied for the regulations, bought the technical information, and visited the production sites, 15 companies submitted proposals on eight fields. The two fields which were not included in the proposals will be included in the coming tender, which is being prepared. In the field of investments, the companies that submitted financing offers proposed a multi-phase program with total values of \$3.7-4.2 billion for the six fields. As for improving the annual production level, the hoped-for additional quantities in the six fields by the end of the century could be 200,000 barrels per day, i.e., approximately 10 million tons every year, compared to the production picture prepared by Sonatrach on the basis of additional investments. [passage omitted]

Foreign Ministry Concerned About Muslims in Bosnia

LD1905211792 Algiers ENTV Television Network
in Arabic 1900 GMT 19 May 92

[Text] According to a report from APS, the Algerian Foreign Ministry is following with interest the situation in the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. According to the same source, Algeria, which has historical relations of friendship and cooperation with Yugoslavia, is now playing a major role, along with international bodies, in an attempt to end the bloody confrontations to which the Muslims in Bosnia are subjected.

The Algerian ambassador in Belgrade has denounced the attitude of the Yugoslav Army, which is siding with the Serbs against the Muslims and the Croats.

SUDAN

Expansion of SUNA Operation

92AF0657B Khartoum AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH
in Arabic 24 Mar 92 p 3

[Article by Faysal Khalid Ahmad al-Bashir]

[Text] The Sudanese News Agency [SUNA] plays an important role in the flow and transmission of news. It is particularly effective in disseminating Sudan's news abroad and in standing firmly against all that is directed against Sudan.

Praiseworthy efforts are being made to develop the agency's performance in order to keep up with the fantastic developments in the era of communication and information. Computer and modern reception and transmission equipment have been introduced. This is in addition to an ambitious plan to link the outermost parts of the country and to cooperate with world [news] agencies.

Speaking to us about the plan to develop SUNA and the difficulties being encountered, the most important of which is the "lack" of official support, SUNA Director al-Tayyib Mustafa said

Computer Age

"SUNA entered the computer age on 11 March, with the aim of improving its performance. This has affected its news bulletins which, have grown in form, content, and speed.

"The Arabic-language bulletin is being issued by computer, and the English-language bulletin is to be issued later. One bulletin used to be released at midnight, but now two are being released, one at 0600 and another at 1800. Previously, SUNA was not keeping up with world events, but now everything that is published in the world, both in Arabic and English, is being received, which enables the reader to be up to date. The English bulletin will be issued early, which helps the television, the embassies, and the foreign missions

"Three computer units have been installed, each costing 2.5 million Sudanese pounds. They are of the Apple Macintosh type, which is the latest model and highly advanced. The third one is an IBM unit; it costs 1.5 million pounds.

Explaining further, Muhammad 'Ali Adam, head of the computer division at SUNA, said that "Macintosh equipment is characterized by speed, organization, and accuracy. They are currently being used for desktop publishing. In addition to the three computer units, there are also two Mita photocopiers, which produce 45 sheets per minute. Its most important characteristic is speed. Work is carried out in three stages: First, material written on the computer is compiled and proofread. Then a large number of copies are made in order to be put in final form. A new electronic printing machine of the (Super Fax) model will also be introduced. The division includes seven technicians, three of whom are highly qualified, and the others received three months of training in operating the new machines.

Improvement and Qualification

As part of improving performance, 38 male and female editors have been hired. The number will be brought up to 50. A shift schedule will be put into operation, which would ease the burden. al-Tayyib Mustafa says SUNA is expanding outside [the capital] and establishing a national network. Bureau directors have been sent to all the northern states with the aim of linking the state capitals with the governorates and establishing media cooperation between SUNA and the state authorities. It is also planned to open bureaus in [Wad] Madani, Kassala, Port Sudan, al-Fashir, and Atbarah. The next step is to establish offices in the governorates in order to facilitate news flow between them and the state capitals, and then between the state capitals and Khartoum.

Foreign Bureaus

Continuing, the SUNA director said foreign bureaus are very important. "We have reopened our bureau in Cairo, which has been closed since 1985. A bureau has been opened in Addis Ababa and another bureau will be opened in Ndjamena. Correspondents will be assigned to world capitals in order to link Sudan to the neighboring African countries and then to the world. Also, a bureau will be opened in Harare. Consideration is also being given to opening a bureau in Eritrea in the next stage. The brothers in Eritrea have been given equipment because they are in the process of opening an Eritrean news agency. The equipment has been installed by Sudanese engineers. We will be receiving Eritrea [news agency] through our stations, from which it will be retransmitted to the whole world."

Support for SUNA

Al-Tayyib Mustafa said that government support for SUNA is essential and vital so that it can carry out its mission positively, particularly in the field of transmitting and disseminating Sudan's news to the outside world.

He said "The issue is that SUNA is called upon to provide its own financing, despite the lack of revenues. This demand would be reasonable if SUNA owned a printing press or something that would bring in revenues equivalent to the service we provide to the state. There is no news agency that does not receive assistance. Agence France Press [AFP], for example, is government-supported, despite its great resources. The same thing can be said about the rest of the world news agencies. The world agencies operate commercially and receive payments."

Foreign Media

"SUNA plays an important role in the foreign media and in responding to the media campaign against Sudan following Sudan's new cultural trend. In the field of foreign media, SUNA intercepts foreign news agencies. It is also the only source that can provide information to the outside world. We are seeking to disseminate Sudan's news to all the world and to whoever wishes to obtain such news, free of charge."

Linking the States

"Equipment has been purchased in order to link the state capitals. Each state can transmit to other states. The news is disseminated via microwave, which enables each state to issue its own independent local bulletin and newspapers. Foreign news is retransmitted to the states so that they can receive the news instantly. With regard to the southern states, an office has been opened in Juba and a director has been appointed, despite the security situation there. Bureaus are planned for Waw and Malakal, and technicians will be assigned."

Cooperation With News Agencies

With regard to relations with similar news agencies, he said there is a cultural and information agreement with Iraq. "We are in the process of concluding an agreement with Ethiopia regarding the African News Agency, which belongs to the OAU. The agreement with Ethiopia will be through diplomatic channels. We also have a draft agreement with the Algerian News Agency and with the Iranian News Agency [IRNA]. We also have an agreement with the Libyan News Agency [JANA]."

With regard to updating the technical department, Mustafa said, "We have many projects underway. We had no contact with any international news agencies since last June, with the exception of AFP and an American press agency [not further identified]. Now receiving equipment has been obtained that will enable us to intercept a large number of agencies that operate via radio. We have concluded an agreement with Reuters news agency, which will soon be signed. Contacts are now underway with the Bank Federation in order to introduce an economic news service. An agreement will be signed with the federation in order to reintroduce such news as soon as the agreement is concluded. And so, Sudan will have an excellent news service and an economic service, an important step, since we are reopening the door to exports. A dish antenna will be installed in order to receive Reuters economic service, and we will be receiving photographs transmitted by Reuters for the benefit of the newspapers. We tried to conclude an agreement with the Associated Press [AP] but it declined to transmit its news to us."

"We have a major project to purchase a modern radio interception system. We will purchase recording and radio equipment. SUNA has acquired a plot of land in al-Sahafah area [a Khartoum suburb] in order to build its headquarters there. There are several projects that need assistance."

Information Center

"SUNA has the biggest news resources in Sudan. Therefore, we are considering introducing computers for data and for editing, in view of the importance of information for the country's progress. There is the national capital network linking subscribers to a radio network, so that news will be immediately transmitted to subscribers as soon as it is received. We hope to obtain assistance in order to introduce this service, in view of its importance for the officials and the press. A sports news bulletin will begin publication in the next few months."

"We have obtained preliminary approval from the banks for assistance. Since Reuters agency has the monopoly on economic news, it offers its services in return for 25,000 British pounds. We will provide economic service for a fee less than our cost, an equivalent of 2,000 British pounds in Sudanese currency."

Expanded Role of Media Discussed

92AF0657A Khartoum AL-QUWWAT AL-MUSALLAH in Arabic 24 Mar 92 p 3

[Article by Brig. Gen. (Ret.) 'Abd-al-Rahman Hasan 'Abd-al-Hafiz]

[Text] The National Salvation Revolution has devoted its attention to the information media, because it is the effective means of expressing the people's views and their intellectual participation in the march of development and achievement that we all are seeking to realize. The media is the people's voice that truly expresses the nation's conscience, hopes, and aspirations for a promising future. The Salvation Revolution has paid attention to the media and dedicated to it a conference in which a number of issues of national interest were discussed. The conference adopted more than 60 serious and practical recommendations. It is time for officials of the media leadership to read those recommendations and to implement them with the resources available.

The chairman of Revolution Command Council, fully realizing the importance of the role of the media at this stage, has assumed the post of minister of culture and information in order to give impetus to development and prosperity, God willing.

We hope that while he heads the ministry, many achievements will be accomplished and obstacles that hindered the progress and development of the media will be removed.

When we talk about the media, we must always keep in mind that it is the means that truly express the people's feelings and brings to the authorities' attention their hardships, concerns, and their daily problems in a frank and true manner devoid of lies and hypocrisy.

It is the unjust governments that fear the media, seek to censor it, and ban publication of certain materials. But just governments provide every writer with the opportunity to express his views with complete freedom and with no restrictions whatsoever.

It is then up to the writer to seek facts and report accurately, clearly, and courageously all that is happening in the field. A government needs constructive and objective criticism that substantially contributes to the country's growth and development.

Thank God our country is not short of honest journalists who are truly nationalists, sincere, and devoted to their work, despite shortages and, sometimes, total lack of resources.

In the past, we were accustomed to hearing sycophantic poetry and articles singing the praise of the rulers and pandering to them. But now there is no place for such hypocrites. The Salvation Revolution needs no fanfare. Rather, it needs an efficient media that believes in its sublime mission, in the process of change, construction,

and development, which would contribute with thought and ideas to the improvement and development of performance.

Many great tasks fall on the shoulder of the media man in the development battle in which we are involved. Most important of these is that he should be dynamic and close to the scene of events. He should be in the heart of the battle, keeping up with all current problems and issues, and critical of all actions that do not improve the citizens' conditions or that harm their interest. He should not criticize just for the sake of criticism. He should contribute positively to the efforts to solve all problems of the country and the citizens. Criticism alone is not enough. He should contribute constructive ideas in order to reach acceptable and reasonable solutions to repair all the damages wrought by the previous regimes.

Newspapers and magazines have a great impact on the reader. They remain in front of him to read and reread them carefully, if he so wishes. For this reason, the newspapers are different from the rest of the media. Therefore, I hope that independent papers will be licensed in accordance with the standards and the rationale laid for their publication, so that the circle of participation will expand through the newspapers. The newspapers should expand so that they will cover all the readers in our country and other countries, and that readers could find in them the materials they wish to read about.

There are many problems and obstacles in the printing industry that need to be solved so that the newspapers will play their full role. Among those problems are the newsprint and printing machinery. Printing presses should be granted the facilities to import their needs from abroad without difficulty or hindrance.

We must also enable all the world's newspapers and magazines to enter our country. Sudan is an open country to all honest people and people of sublime principles and lofty ideas. In the meantime, it bans the sordid publications that advocate immorality and debauchery. I do not think that Sudan fears the entry of newspapers committed to national principles and policies, newspapers that promote honesty and sublime values in our society and in honest world societies.

The radio service has been, and still is, presenting a variety of good and useful material. Despite its poor resources, the radio service has been able to cover that broad expanse with total efficiency. But I must say that more opportunities must be given to creative writers, artists, and playwrights. There are many unknown capable people who, for one reason or another, shied away from radio. We must provide them with an opportunity to participate in broadcasting work with their production and ideas.

Another very important subject that radio should pay attention to is surveying public opinion of the programs it broadcasts, and to accept suggestions that would contribute to improving and developing its programs.

Many people, including the revolution leader, have called for boosting the radio's transmission power so that Sudan's voice can be heard worldwide. This is extremely important. It is the radios of the obscure and unknown countries that remain silent, and their broadcasts are confined within their walls, not even covering their border areas. Therefore, boosting radio broadcasting is something to which we must devote our unwavering attention, regardless of the cost to the state.

Last but not least, the equipment and installations should be updated in order to keep abreast with the age.

The remarks I have just made about radio also apply to television, with a slight difference. Radio is heard, while television is both heard and seen. Television tasks are therefore greater. Those responsible for running television need to make greater efforts so that television viewing will increase, especially in the evenings.

Therefore, a larger [percentage of the] public needs to be attracted to television viewing. This can be achieved only by selecting good materials and useful programs.

We should, therefore, be more open to the world and import high-quality and literary materials. Television has become a principal tool in the world. We should not be content with media cooperation with particular states. Rather, we should be open to most of the world countries that have programs and materials of value.

We should also concentrate on educational programs for adults and children that deal with religious, scientific, and literary matters, as well as programs that deal with industries, inventions, and discoveries.

The television service should follow events and report them to the citizen instantly. The successful media is one which reports all that is happening in the community with words, photographs, and television cameras. This requires the media men to be present at the scene at all times. They should not be isolated from incidents taking place in Sudan and abroad.

Undoubtedly this calls for awareness and definite perception on the part of the media man, and availability of resources, such as cameras and means of transport that would facilitate his work.

Though the world is large, sophisticated media equipment has shortened the distances. We see and hear about events as they occur in distant parts of the world. Media men should be aware of that, and should prepare themselves to keep up with developments in the media.

Rumors are a dangerous weapon. So why do we not prepare effective weapons to refute them? We have been the target of biased rumors that are dangerous to society and negatively affect the citizens' safety and security. Most unfortunately, those rumors always find the right climate that encourages their spread.

There is no doubt that we are fighting against a vicious war of rumors emanating from the south. We must be

aware of all that is being published and broadcast by the rebel media. We should seek to thwart and deny such rumors.

Biased rumors directly affect morale. They are one of the most important tools of war and of winning battles. Psychological warfare could play a basic role in influencing soldiers' morale. The program [entitled] "From the Fields of Sacrifice" that is being filmed in the battlefield has played a major role in raising the morale of our forces fighting in the south, which is the best evidence of the effectiveness of the media.

In order to ensure that our mission is fulfilling its role, we must seek to boost radio and television equipment and encourage importing them from abroad. We must try to provide spares and batteries in order to achieve the biggest objective we are aspiring to: to usefully exploit this important instrument and to ensure that it is available in every institution and home.

The media is to nations that strive for progress and prosperity what the spirit is to the body. Therefore, the state should generously provide all the necessary resources in order to develop it and keep abreast with contemporary developments.

The media man always comes first. Therefore, he should be provided with a dignified life and be able to solve his personal problems, so that he can devote himself totally to his major national tasks at this important juncture of the country's life: that of change and of building the society of faith, justice, and equality. We should spare nothing to provide him with ongoing training both at home and abroad. A media man should be fully qualified. One of the common shortcomings is the numerous typographical errors and the announcers' mispronunciation of words and names of countries. Lack of knowledge is not a shame, but pretending knowledge is. The errors that are being made are unacceptable and negatively affect the readers and television viewers.

We must provide all the resources for training and for the modernization of equipment, so that Sudan's voice will be heard loudly and clearly throughout the world, upholding justice and advocating welfare, justice, and equality for all nations. God is the grantor of success.

Charge d'Affaires in Nairobi on War Efforts

92AF0711C London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
18 Apr 92 p 7

[Interview with 'Abdallah al-Azraq, charge d'affaires at Sudanese Embassy in Kenya, from Nairobi, interviewer and date not given: "Sudanese Charge d'Affaires in Nairobi: 'No Role for Iran, Libya in Battles in South; Rookie Journalist Sparks Crisis Between Sudan, Kenya'"]

[Text] Sudan's charge d'affaires in Nairobi, 'Abdallah al-Azraq, announced that the Sudanese Government's

plan in its war with [rebel leader John] Garang's movement is designed to end all rebel military presence in the southern region during the weeks ahead.

Al-Azraq said that the [Sudanese] Armed Forces [SAF] and the Sudanese Popular Defense Forces [PDF] have actually accomplished an important part of this government plan, but he stressed in an interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that this is not an alternative to dialogue in southern Sudan.

The Sudanese charge d'affaires launched a harsh attack on the Red Cross organization, which he said was a party fighting on the side of the rebels, according to documents in the possession of the Sudanese Government. The text of the interview follows.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Is the Sudanese Government intent on a military victory over all forces of Garang's movement, or is there a specific plan to liberate certain towns, and then stop for negotiations in Nigeria?

[Al-Azraq] Some time ago the Sudanese Government made a decision to recapture areas controlled by Garang's movement. The plan began in Kordofan and Darfur, and now the south, to liberate all Sudanese territory. National dialogue will then ensue to establish the rule of division of authority and resources, followed by devotion to rebuilding Sudan, which has lived under destruction since its independence.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Who has the responsibility, offensively and defensively, for the battles in the south—the SAF or the PDF? Which is larger in size?

[Al-Azraq] The PDF operates under the command of the SAF, and is definitely smaller than the army. Due to its presence, the military dimension has taken on a popular dimension as a sign of popular participation against the rebellion.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Garang's forces say that the SAF is withdrawing from the towns they lost, while Khartoum speaks of fierce clashes. Where is the truth?

[Al-Azraq] Take Bor, for example. This town was liberated in a battle outside it. The SAF took it over after Garang's forces withdrew.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] The forces of Lam Akol and Riyak Mashar, having split off from Garang, are said to be aiding the SAF and operating on their behalf.

[Al-Azraq] The operation to liberate the south makes no exception for the Lam Akol wing or the areas under his control. He is a strategic foe, exactly like Garang.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What are the factors behind selecting this particular time to launch a broad-scale war in southern Sudan?

[Al-Azraq] Four basic factors have brought this about.

- Fighting between the two wings of the movement;
- Decisive operations conducted by the SAF against parties to the rebellion outside the southern region;

- A loss of confidence in John Garang by his own forces, the surrender of many of them, and their entrance into peace villages established by the Sudanese Government;
- John Garang's failure to convince many of his fighters and cadres that the peaceful solutions being proposed by the government are not positive.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Has the SAF encountered any military surprises as they assaulted the towns they have liberated?

[Al-Azraq] The government has not encountered any surprises. It settled matters decisively before engaging in battles.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] You said that the government's plan was to militarily eliminate the rebellion in the south. What is the meaning of political negotiations, then?

[Al-Azraq] Current and past rebellions have always prevented southerners and northerners from negotiating to resolve the problems between the two parties. These can be resolved through dialogue, not war.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What does the Sudanese Government have against the International Red Cross that makes it ban its activity in southern Sudan?

[Al-Azraq] There are a number of reasons and sticking points against the Red Cross and its activity in the south, including:

- Our forces have captured vehicles being used by the rebels bearing the insignia of the International Red Cross.
- The Red Cross is transporting military things and materiel. Prisoners we have taken from Garang's forces reported the presence of Red Cross aircraft transporting military materiel to Garang's movement.
- The Red Cross is recruiting children and helping to transport them to camps belonging to the movement.
- The Red Cross is launching false attacks on the Sudanese Government.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Where has the southerner who was living in the areas liberated from Garang's movement gone? Has he gone with Garang, or has he sought refuge with the SAF?

[Al-Azraq] The majority have come to us, because the movement is exercising a policy of looting the property of the inhabitants, taking their children to training camps, and there are many other reasons.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What is the role of Iran and Libya in the present military campaign against the Garang Movement?

[Al-Azraq] The Kenyan Council of Churches said that some "bearded men" were seen in the town of Juba wearing "djellabas," and described them as being from

countries that support terrorism. This aroused laughter and ridicule, since it was the only evidence of the presence of Libyans and Iranians within the SAF. In summary, we are establishing a "prize" for anyone who comes across a single Iranian or Libyan fighter within the SAF operating in the south. Sudan does not need fighting men, but it does need materiel.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What is the extent of military support for Sudan from Iran and Libya in its current battle against the Garang Movement?

[Al-Azraq] Military support came from Iran last year, as is well known. To the best of my knowledge, there is no military support or materiel from Libya.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] The Garang Movement is a member of the opposition [Democratic National] Grouping that includes the major Sudanese parties. Do the Sudanese opposition parties have any role in the current battles in the south?

[Al-Azraq] Militarily, nothing. We believe that material, diplomatic, and media support exists.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Sudanese-Kenyan relations have wavered between good, bad, and frozen. What is the situation now, following the visit of [Kenyan President Daniel] Arap Moi to Sudan and his last meeting with Lt. Gen. 'Umar al-Bashir in Addis Ababa?

[Al-Azraq] We believe there is no Kenyan Government support for the Garang Movement, but Kenya is a major transit point for international relief assistance operating in southern Sudan. These organizations exploit their presence in Kenya to support the Garang Movement. President Arap Moi has taken note of this, and has agreed with Lt. Gen. al-Bashir to deal with the matter.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Is it true that the Sudanese foreign minister apologized to the Kenyan president during his last visit to Kenya?

[Al-Azraq] After the Kenyan president's last visit to Khartoum, Sudanese journalists were given a briefing about it. One rookie newsman falsely attributed to Lt. Gen. al-Bashir a statement that Sudan threatened Kenya with reciprocal treatment. Kenya's foreign ministry objected, and the Sudanese foreign minister came to clarify the situation. The entire matter was dealt with in the recent meeting between Arap Moi and Lt. Gen. al-Bashir in Addis Ababa, and it is now behind us.

Garang Adviser on Current Military Offensive

92AF0711B London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
18 Apr 92 p 7

[Interview with Dr. Mansur Khalid, adviser to Colonel John Garang, by Sayyid Ahmad Khalifa in Nairobi, date not given: "Mansur Khalid: 'Biggest Battles Not Yet Begun, Talk of Peace Meaningless Now'"]

[Text] While the Sudanese Government speaks of its [armed] forces' progress and the collapse of forces of the Garang Movement, the Garang Movement talks of steadfastness, resistance, and the impossibility of achieving a decisive victory in guerilla warfare. What is certain, however, is that the fiercest battles in the wide-ranging war in southern Sudan have yet to take place, since everyone believes that the fighting is escalating and that furious and costly battles lay ahead.

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT interviewed Dr. Mansur Khalid, adviser to Col. John Garang, to talk about how the movement sees the picture. He is also in Nairobi now for follow-up. Meanwhile, Col. John Garang is following up from the interior and commanding the battles.

Following is the text of the interview:

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What is your overall assessment of the military situation between the movement and the Sudanese Armed Forces?

[Khalid] This, naturally, is the largest campaign in the history of the war between the north and the south, in terms of the scale of the offensive and the advanced nature of the weaponry. It is clear that the objective is to realize a decisive victory for the regime to end the movement.

The campaign began last January. It was touched off by Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Hasan when he visited Juba, where he announced that he would hold Friday prayer in Torit that same month. By last week, they had only gotten to Bor, after the Lam Akol wing opened the way, or rather, butchered the way open.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Government forces appear to be moving toward their military objectives with virtually no resistance. How do you explain this?

[Khalid] Just the reverse is true. The army is unable to move out of Juba, and is surrounded at (Angala), even though the battle is unequal. It is a joint campaign between Iran and the government of Lt. Gen. ['Umar] al-Bashir. So far, the war has been going on, for the most part, in army areas where its friends, the Lam Akol group, are, and autumn is only a few weeks away.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] The government speaks of achieving decisive victories in official military communiqués that give numbers and names. How can this be denied?

[Khalid] All government reports, or most of them, are false. Two months ago they announced that Torit had fallen and that Kapoeta had been abandoned. Neither has happened up til now. They also said that John Garang is in Uganda, whereas he is leading the war himself from the interior.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] The Garang Movement is a member of the opposition [Democratic] National Grouping. Under these conditions, how is the grouping assisting the movement?

[Khalid] The grouping supports the movement in its battle against government forces. Communiques have been issued, and letters have been sent to a number of the chairmen explaining the situation. The grouping is a political body, in the final analysis. As for the legitimate command of the [Sudanese] Armed Forces, it is in full military coordination with us.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Where have the movement's forces that abandoned some towns retreated to—the interior or abroad?

[Khalid] All of the movement's retreating forces go to other areas under its control, where they regroup for other battles.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Are modern weapons being used on the side of the Sudanese Armed Forces in the current campaign, or are they traditional weapons?

[Khalid] They have used new tanks of Chinese manufacture, Chinese fighter aircraft, and Iranian weapons.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Is there any evidence of the presence of Libyans and Iranians, as your side has declared?

[Khalid] Yes. There are foreigners in Wadi Sidna, Upper Nile, and Juba, and there are experts. Both are ignorant of the nature of guerilla warfare. We believe that all of the thinking going into the campaign is that of politicians, not of military men. The coming months will show that the greatest slaughter to occur in the history of the Sudanese Armed Forces failed to achieve the designs of those who were guilty of it and made the plans.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What about the statement that negotiations and peace after the war will be easier and more possible?

[Khalid] This talk no longer has any meaning, because it is not a matter of a battle between a government in the north and a movement in the south. Rather, it is a general battle against a regime rejected by the Sudanese people and the international community, including neighboring nations. In sum, there can be no reconciliation or dialogue after all of these atrocities against defenseless Sudanese civilians and the use of foreigners to destroy an entire people, as happened when the Ethiopian forces intervened in Fashala, causing a dispute among the Ethiopian rulers themselves.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] How are humanitarian aspects proceeding amidst these fierce battles?

[Khalid] The humanitarian aspects are more painful in this military campaign, because there is a universally-agreed upon formula. Those who are harmed by war could find care and protection, but the government insists on its positions and maligns the Red Cross. No nation has ever said that the Red Cross transports weapons. This shows the world how ignorant Khartoum is.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What is it, then, between the government and the Red Cross and other international relief agencies?

[Khalid] The government does not want witnesses to its atrocities in the war. It does not want evidence of foreign intervention in the battles as happened at Fashala.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Are any northerners fighting on the side of the movement?

[Khalid] Yes. Northerners are fighting on the side of the movement.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Are there any names that can be announced in this regard to stress the nationalist nature of the movement's struggle, as its old program stated?

[Khalid] They most definitely are present, but for security reasons there is no need to announce their names.

Sanctions Effect on Petroleum Supply, Airline

92AF0729C London AL-HAYAH in Arabic

20 Apr 92 p 9

[Article by Salah 'Abd-al-Rahim: "Sudan Sees No Danger to Its Oil Reserve From Air Blockade of Libya"]

[Text] Khartoum—Sudan's minister of energy, Dr. 'Uthman 'Abd-al-Wahhab, said that the amount of petroleum presently available in the country is reassuring, with gasoline and diesel fuel from Libya sufficient for about 46 days' consumption. A year's supply of fuel oil is on hand. He added that about 80,000 tons of fuel are presently being unloaded at the port.

'Abd-al-Wahhab indicated that the government will lease the Port Sudan oil refinery, which has a daily capacity of 471 tons, to private companies that it has recently allowed to import petroleum.

An informed source at the Secretariat for Libyan-Sudanese Integration Affairs in Khartoum told AL-HAYAH that Libyan imports of about 1.2 million tons of petroleum to Sudan annually, mainly crude diesel [fuel], are provided under an agreement signed in 1988 and renewed annually.

Last September, Sudan asked Libya to renew the agreement every three years, and the subject was supposed to have been discussed last month. However, there were no clarifications as to why the meeting for this purpose was not held. The source said that Sudan covers most of the cost of Libyan petroleum through exports to Libya that include meat, legumes, and fodder, plus a small amount in hard currency paid on easy terms. The source told AL-HAYAH that Libyan petroleum supplies to Sudan will not be affected by the Libyan aviation sanctions, unless the blockade includes maritime transport sanctions. The Sudanese [Transitional] National Assembly recently called on the government, Arab states, and others not to honor the international blockade, and

declared Sudan's solidarity with Libya, with whom it has a system of merger unification, but the government has not yet formally announced its official stand on Libya.

The source indicated that commercial exchange between the two countries is worth about \$100 million, at a time when there is a question as to whether, in defiance of the international blockade resolution, Libya will continue to make its airline's twice-weekly flights to Khartoum and those of meat transport aircraft from Sudan to Libya.

A responsible source at the Sudanese Civil Aviation Administration told AL-HAYAH that the government has not formally announced that it will halt the weekly Sudanese flights from Khartoum to Tripoli.

Arab Development Funds Threaten Freeze

92AF0711A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
23 Apr 92 p 9

[Article by Malik Ja'far in London: "Five Nations, Including Sudan, Threatened With Membership Freeze in Arab Development Institutions; Sudan's Finance Minister: 'Freezing Our Membership in Arab Funds of No Concern To Us'"]

[Text] Sudanese Minister of Finance 'Abd-al-Rahim Hamdi declared yesterday that Sudan would not be greatly affected if the Arab development funds decide to freeze its membership in them. Hamdi revealed that five countries—Sudan, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, and Mauritania—have been given 18 months in which to repay arrears to the Arab Monetary Fund [AMF], the Arab Development Fund [ADF], and the [Arab] Investment Guarantee Institution [AIGI] before their memberships are frozen.

The minister admitted in statements to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Sudan was actually one of the Arab countries that, in recent years, had failed to make installment payments on its outstanding debts to some Arab financing institutions and development funds. He added, however, that at this stage Sudan is not concerned about whether its membership is frozen or not. He indicated that his country has not taken advantage of loans from the three aforementioned funds for a long time, because they have little money available and their management has been unable to attract funds from international markets to meet their outflows. For their part, reliable sources in touch with the decision to freeze the membership of Arab countries that are late in repaying the fund and the Arab development institutions commented to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday that the stance of such countries as Sudan on repaying its obligations is the reason that Arab Development Fund balances have eroded. The sources, which did not wish to be revealed, added that it is useless for the fund's management to initiate loans from the international market when it knows in advance that what will be borrowed will not be repaid.

For his part, Sudanese Finance Minister Hamdi said, in his statements to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, that the last meeting of Arab development funds and financing institutions, which he described as a stormy meeting filled with confrontation, gave five Arab countries—Sudan, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, and Mauritania—18 months in which to repay their installment arrears and debts owed to the AMF and the ADF, and one year in which to repay their arrears to the AIGI. Hamdi said that certain Gulf states were behind the decision, while the five states concerned opposed the form of the resolution, and others, including Jordan, abstained. The Sudanese finance minister added that he explained to those gathered for the meeting—which was attended by 'Abd-al-Shakkur Sha'lan, director of Middle East Operations for the International Monetary Fund [IMF]—that Sudan's present financial situation leaves it unable to meet its commitments or repay the debts that have come due. He said that he pointed out that the IMF, which the Sudan owes billions of dollars, has not closed off Sudan's membership in its international organization. It is still negotiating with the Sudanese Government over how to find a way out of its financial crisis. But, he added that, in the event the freeze resolution is implemented, Sudan is capable of continuing outside the framework of the three financial institutions.

Article 26 of the agreement establishing the AMF provides for termination of member states that fail to repay their debts. There are also similar provisions in agreements establishing the other Arab development institutions, but the provisions have never been applied. Thus, the resolutions taken at the Tunis meetings are considered a precedent in the history of these institutions.

The total amount that has not been repaid to these institutions is about \$793 million, constituting about 19 percent of the total capital of participating Arab institutions, including AMF arrears equal to 23 percent of its capital at the end of 1990. The AIGI is known to have paid large amounts of compensation in 1990 and 1991, reaching \$41 million, or about half its paid capital. This compensation, paid to guarantee trade operations, increased because of conditions surrounding the Gulf crisis at the end of 1990 and the first half of last year.

British Not Reassured by al-Turabi Visit

92AF0729A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
28 Apr 92 pp 1,4

[Article by 'Uthman Mirghani: "British Official to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: 'Unfruitful Meeting with Al-Turabi: London Disturbed by Sudan Developments'"]

[Text] London—A responsible source at the British Foreign Office revealed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that officials there, headed by David Hogarthe, assistant foreign minister, met with Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, secretary general of the Sudanese [National] Islamic Front [NIF], who is on a personal visit to Britain, where he is delivering two lectures.

According to the source, the meeting took place at Dr. al-Turabi's request, and discussed conditions in the Sudanese arena, particularly as they relate to human rights, the war in the south, political and economic conditions, and the strained relationship between the Sudanese Government and relief organizations.

The Foreign Ministry source reported that the viewpoints of the two parties were at extreme variance, and that no agreement was achieved on any of the subjects discussed. It added that the dialogue seemed to be on two different wavelengths, and therefore was not useful.

The source said, "There is nothing that would lead us to change our policy towards the Sudanese Government based on what we heard and saw."

It should be noted that relations between Britain and Sudan have been strained and weakened, leading Britain to direct a number of criticisms at the government of Lt. Gen. 'Umar al-Bashir, particularly as these relate to its human rights record, the ban on a multi-party political system, and the lack of democracy. Britain has halted all its economic aid to Sudan, except for relief assistance.

The source denied that al-Turabi's visit to Britain had any official nature. It said that he came to London on a personal visit to deliver lectures, and pointed out that the meeting held at the British Foreign Office last Friday does not mean a change in British policy.

The source reported that the British Government frequently meets with visitors coming to London on private visits, and pointed out that the British Government's meetings with al-Turabi were limited solely to the meeting reported.

The British source expressed his country's displeasure with conditions in Sudan, particularly as they relate to human rights, which he described as "extremely bad and disturbing." It said that there is no indication that the Sudanese Government intends to bring about a political relaxation and move towards political pluralism.

The source indicated that the meeting with al-Turabi failed to allay British convictions and resulted in nothing that would lead London to reassess its policy toward Khartoum.

Dr. al-Turabi is reported to have delivered a lecture in London yesterday evening. The [Sudanese] opposition [Democratic] National Grouping [DNG] organized a protest in front of the institute where the lecture was held.

In other developments, the "Africa Watch" human rights group issued a report yesterday, in which it said that the Sudanese Government had detained hundreds of oppositionists since it decreed a general amnesty last year. The report referred to acts of torture against detainees conducted in secret houses.

The report said that "Government declarations are contradicted by the facts of massive human rights violations." The Sudanese Government rejected two similar reports recently issued by Amnesty International and the "Article 19 Organization." [name refers to Article 19 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights]

Hamdi on Oil, Taxes, NIF, Banks, More

92AF0729B London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
28 Apr 92 p 11

[Interview with 'Abd-al-Rahim Hamdi, Sudanese finance minister, by Malik Ja'far in London, date not given: "'Abd-al-Rahim Hamdi to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: 'I Don't Know How Citizens Adjust to Cost of Living in Sudan; We Shall Decree Basic Reforms Permanently Exempting Those with Low Income from Taxes; No Dollar Exchange Rate Target for Sudanese Pound; Expenditure on War Unaffected by Budget Deficit Level; Sudanese Finance Ministry Not Intervening in Decisions Granting Bank Transfer, Control of Credit by NIF'"]

[Text] Sudanese Finance Minister 'Abd-al-Rahim Hamdi admitted that the present minimum wage level in Sudan is insufficient to cover the minimum cost of living ceiling, especially in the wake of his decision to lift subsidies on benzene and gasoline, which caused sharp rises in consumer basket prices. In a newspaper interview conducted by AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in London this week, however, Hamdi refused to agree that sharp price increases in Sudan led to a "forced reduction" in public consumption that has enabled the Sudanese Government to achieve a surplus of produced commodities, headed by wheat and sugar, which it has begun to export.

The finance minister said that, like other people, he has no explanation for the perplexing phenomenon of how the Sudanese have been able to adjust to the high cost of living in the country, but he promised that, in the context of reducing the [cost of] living squeeze, he would come up with a tax system that would exempt the great majority of low- and middle-income workers from having to pay personal income tax.

On another topic, Hamdi added that the selective practices of Sudanese banks in granting the foreign transfers needed to finance import licenses, which are facilities largely controlled at present by elements of the [National] Islamic Front [NIF] supporting the regime of [Lt. Gen. 'Umar] al-Bashir, are beyond the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Sudan.

On the health front, the finance minister revealed that a disagreement between the state and pharmaceutical importers over import policy and price subsidies for medicine is what brought about the suffocating crisis in medicine availability in Sudan. He failed to indicate any expectation of a relaxation of the dispute, which threatens the lives of tens of thousands of sick Sudanese.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] During my visit to Khartoum, I observed a severe, genuine crisis in medicine. The large (Kambal) Pharmacy, which is supposed to operate 24 hours a day, is closed for days at a time, and even when it opens, the drawers and shelves are empty. Do you not agree that making drugs and medicine available in Sudan is the direct responsibility of the government?

[Hamdi] The medicine crisis is undeniable, however the responsibility does not fall on the government's shoulders, but on those of the League of Pharmaceutical Importers, whose members insist that the state has to continue to subsidize medicine and provide them with the hard currency needed to import it. We reject both of these matters in our financial policy, which is aimed at encouraging free trade and non-intervention in import or sales policy. We continue to give importers the freedom to import medicine and to price it as they deem appropriate.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] But does this situation not lead to the death of innocent citizens as victims of an unjustifiable dispute between the government and pharmaceutical merchants?

[Hamdi] The basic medicines needed by the sick are available in the hospitals. We insist that making other medicines available is the responsibility of the importers, not the state. The state has done what it can to open the door to importation and to free prices. The importers have to accept their responsibilities.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] In the decree you issued removing subsidies on the prices of petroleum products, you mentioned that the economic blockade of Libya was the main reason that subsidies were lifted. Does this explanation not contradict, first of all, the statements of "Salvation Revolution" Command Council advisor 'Ali al-Hajj, who told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT a day before the decree that the economic blockade of Libya would not affect oil supplies to Sudan because they come by sea, and secondly, the announcement of the Sudanese energy minister two days ago that the economic blockade of Libya does not affect oil supply in Sudan, since the available amount is sufficient to fuel the country for 46 days?

[Hamdi] There is no contradiction whatsoever. On the one hand, petroleum derivative subsidies cost the Sudanese treasury 20 billion [Sudanese] pounds. The Sudanese Government—as a whole, not just the Ministry of Finance—made the decision to lift the subsidy a month and a half before it was announced, to free the petroleum products market by tempting importers to import benzene and gasoline and sell it at commercial prices, and to remove the huge deficit in the public treasury.

As for the reason for choosing to time the announcement of the decree with the occasion of the economic blockade of Libya, this was due to the likelihood of the current aviation sanctions developing into a maritime blockade

that would halt Libyan petroleum supplies to Sudan. So, we took the step as a precaution.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Taxes are a problem in Sudan. Each successive government has failed to reform the tax system. State workers continue to bear a tax burden that is relatively higher than that borne by merchants and businessmen. This distortion has led to a deficit in public treasury resources and general disgust among the lower income classes, who watch the class of rich market traders getting richer. How do you plan to mend this distorted situation?

[Hamdi] First, there is a general tendency among financiers and businessmen to avoid paying the general tax. This is not something new. In the case of state workers, their taxes are deducted before they receive their salaries, so they can not avoid paying taxes. Generally speaking, the distortions you speak are due to the absence of a technical mechanism and means of monitoring commercial and monetary transactions in a manner that would allow us to determine personal incomes, and thereby set the income tax. Right now, a Sudanese expert, Dr. 'Atbani, is engaged in establishing a new framework for Sudan's tax system, the most important features of which will be to raise the minimum tax-exempt income ceilings; but fundamental reform takes time.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What are the standards employed by the committee that determines the pound's [exchange] rate from day to day as it sets its dollar value? Is there a ceiling or a target pound rate that the government is hoping to achieve?

[Hamdi] In fixing the pound rate against the dollar, the committee takes into account the actual daily dollar demand at the banks, which includes loan payments and visible and invisible transfer applications. The committee compares those with the daily volume of dollar purchases through expatriate transfers, and on the basis of supply and demand, the pound rate against the dollar is raised or lowered.

This is not the most ideal way, because there are many obstacles, including administrative ones, which we are trying to remove by creating a true securities market in the future. In order to establish a market, we took a regional tour and benefitted a great deal from the experience of Egypt and others.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Sudanese citizens and businessmen whom I met in Khartoum were complaining that authorization to change local currency into hard currency is totally monopolized by elements of the NIF who support the regime.

[Hamdi] We, as the government and Ministry of Finance, do not intervene in the policies or daily operations of the banks, in transfers or anything else. What this means is that what happens in the banks is their own business and that of their managers. We have to accept that there are groups of banks with special interests.

some party-related, others geographic, vocational, or sectarian. As an example, there is the Islamic Bank of Western Sudan, which is controlled by the al-Khatimiyah sect, which naturally restricts its operations to its followers. There is also the Farmer's Bank, the Faisal Islamic Bank, and others. A bank's management is responsible for its credit policies, not the Sudanese Government. The Ministry of Finance cannot control banking operations in any way.

Returning to your question about whether there is a target dollar rate for the pound, we would emphasize that the government is not gambling on achieving one at the present stage, because a target rate requires an automatic mechanism to defend it, by protecting local currency through intervening in money markets, as central banks in Western countries do. Moreover, in the absence of usurious interest-bearing transactions in the Sudanese economy, it is not possible to maintain a fixed pound rate by raising its interest rate against other currencies, as happens in Egypt, for example. Thus, over the foreseeable term, we will continue to use the present form of the policy to set the pound's price.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Sudanese expatriates are refraining from remitting [money] in anticipation of a rise in the value of the dollar against the pound, which is a result of the policy to set the value of the pound. Does this not lead to a negative impact on capital inflows into Sudan, especially expatriate remittances?

[Hamdi] First of all, expatriates are not refraining from making remittances to Sudan. The few who are gambling on a higher value for the dollar against the pound are very small in number, and generally speaking, there is no way to convince them or any other group to invest in Sudan without raising productivity and the country's export ability to reap more foreign currency to strengthen the pound. In general, pound support policies are not aimed at expatriates, but at liberalizing the Sudanese economy and removing trade structure imbalances.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] The dollar rate is rising against the pound these days. Should it continue to rise, it will first lead to inflation, and then to the return of the black market. How will this situation be controlled?

[Hamdi] In one way, the rise in the value of the dollar at this stage is tied to increased demand prior to the start of the haj season, and also because the state is concluding dollar-account settlements with some companies and individuals. Thus, it is a phased increase, not an indicator of the appearance of a black, or parallel, market. The state has also taken precautions by imposing a number of regulations to ensure that the black market does not appear, including a regulation banning transfers from a hard currency account to another account and making it easier to obtain hard currency transfers from the banks.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Operations to privatize Sudan's commercial banks began with sale of the Commercial Bank. There is now talk of selling the Bank of Khartoum, the largest government bank, El Nilein Bank, and Unity Bank. What are the proposed formats for privatization, and how will the purchase prices be paid, in free or local currency?

[Hamdi] The government's financial policy is to withdraw gradually from finance operations. This will be done by transferring ownership of the commercial banks to the private sector. In this context, the Commercial Bank and its 24 branches were sold to farmers, so that it could become their banking instrument. The new Farmer's Bank has 2 billion pounds in capital, i.e. three times the capital of the other commercial banks. We are taking the same approach to privatizing the Bank of Khartoum, El Nilein Bank, and Unity Bank—to convert them to public joint stock companies, with the government no longer holding a majority interest. Instead, the government shall have a single "gold share" in each bank, to be used to maintain coordination of financial policies between its other institutions and the banks.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Did you receive any offers from foreigners? Are there any restrictions on foreign investor ownership in terms of their percentage share in these banks?

[Hamdi] Privatization of the Bank of Khartoum, El Nilein Bank, and Unity Bank has not yet started, but three offers to purchase Sudan Airways have been made to the government by Gulf citizens. Once we have completed evaluating it, we will determine the number and value of shares, and put it up for sale at public auction. In the case of the Telephone and Telecommunications Authority, we have received three offers from Western and Arab institutions, and have come to an agreement in principle with one of them. In none of these cases will the government retain a majority interest in the companies it sells, but we must not forget that, in our developing country, investors feel greater confidence if the government owns part of the shares in their companies. Thus, we shall retain some government ownership in these institutions. As for the method of payment, it will be in local currency for shareholders, and in hard currency for foreign investors, at the pound exchange rates prevailing at the time of offer for sale.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Financial circles speak of a Sudanese-French rapprochement in the wake of the \$65 million loan granted by the French bank Credit Agricole to Sudanese Airways for the purchase of a new Airbus aircraft. Is this true?

[Hamdi] We hope it is true, but we have not observed any opening up of trade relations or increase in French lines of credit to Sudan. Regarding the Credit Agricole loan to Sudanese Airways, this is certainly progress, a welcome step, and a sign, especially since Credit Agricole has promised to provide another loan to the company to purchase another Airbus aircraft at a subsequent stage.

For our part, we welcome the step by this bank, which is one of the largest multinational banks, and we hope that it will be the beginning of more loans.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] There is strong speculation that the Sudanese Government will announce the start of oil pumping and refining in the (al-Mujallad) region before next July.

[Hamdi] The amount of oil in the al-Mujallad region is minor, no more than 10 percent of Sudan's oil needs. Exploitation of oil in the region is actually going to begin before July, particularly now that a small refinery has been installed near the production area, but the amounts produced will be used to cover the needs of the western region. That is fine, but although it will save money for the state that can be used for imports, the oil drilling areas of real significance are situated in southern Sudan, where exploration and drilling operations have been halted because of the war.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Past estimates of the cost of the war were about \$1 million daily. Now with the increased severity of the fighting, what is the daily bill for the war, and what is its impact on aggravating the public treasury deficit?

[Hamdi] When we talk of the war in southern Sudan, we do not speak about bills and costs, because our priorities are to end the war, whatever the cost in lives, never mind money. What this government is trying to do is to liberate the land of the Sudanese citizen, whatever the price may be, and at the same time, to develop his resources and provide him with the food he needs through policies of self-reliance and rectifying the accretions of past corruption. Naturally, with increased war spending, the public budget deficit will worsen, but we are in no position to stop spending on the war effort in southern Sudan, unless the Sudanese Government announces that it lacks the financial capacity to continue to do so. At the same time, we hope to meet the public deficit with tax revenues realized by the state.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Is Sudan committed to repaying installments on loans made by Arab funds and development and investment institutions? If the answer is no, is Sudan not afraid of having its membership in them frozen?

[Hamdi] Since the end of the eighties, conditions in Sudan have made it one of the Arab countries that have failed, in recent years, to repay their debts to some Arab development funds and financial institutions. As such, it is one of four Arab countries—in addition to Iraq, Yemen, and Somalia—currently threatened with having their memberships frozen in the Arab Monetary Fund, the Arab Development Fund, and the Arab Investment Guarantee Organization. But the issue of freezing membership does not concern Sudan very much right now, since it has long failed to benefit from loans of the three aforementioned funds, because of the minuscule sums available in them and their management's inability to attract funds from international markets to compensate

for their outflows. At the last annual meeting of the funds, attended by 'Abd-al-Shakkur Sha'llan, director of International Monetary Fund [IMF] operations in the Middle East, we made it clear to the management of the Arab funds and financial institutions that we were not pleased with threats and hints of freezing our membership in these institutions. In this regard, we pointed out that the IMF, which Sudan owes billions of dollars, has not closed Sudan out of membership in it, and it continues to negotiate with the Sudanese Government to find a way out of the financial crisis it is going through.

Overall, we blame the greed of marketplace merchants for the high prices that now exist, since recent benzene and gasoline [price] increases do not justify the sharp increases that occurred subsequently in food and consumer goods prices. I say here that the government does not want to intervene to impose fixed prices on merchants, because that contradicts the free market policies it is following, but if the situation worsens, the state may find itself obliged to legislate fixed prices to keep high prices under control.

Formation of Preliminary Conferences Under Way

EA0505135092 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1740 GMT
3 May 92

[Text] With the convening of basic conferences on 2 May in each of the 85 governorates [as heard], power is being handed over to the people in all of the states.

The State of Khartoum and its component governorates witnessed the formation of the conferences. [Words indistinct], the head of the conference and members of its secretariat were then selected. In its second working session, the conference discussed national issues as recorded on its agenda and expressed its views on them. It concluded by reviewing the general conference's recommendations and resolutions and by expressing its support for the objectives and orientations of the revolution under its current leadership. The conference also recommended the provision of health, security, social, and reformatory services.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, chairman of the Revolution Command Council [RCC] and the Council of Ministers, has stressed that these conferences should be models for consultative deliberations, decision-making, decision implementation, and debates on all issues of concern to the citizens and the homeland.

Major General Ibrahim Nayil Idam, RCC member and minister of youth and sports, explained that the participants in the conferences have the power to elect all their representatives directly and without constraint.

Mr. Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah, speaker of the Transitional National Assembly, said the establishment of the preliminary conferences of the political system in the country must be considered as the first step along the path of consultation, democracy, and freedom.

Surrender Demanded, Amnesty Offered**Rebel Defections Reported**

E41005212592 Khartoum SUNA in English 1625 GMT
10 May 92

[Text] The commander of the Equatoria military district, Major General Ja'far Sharif Mahjub announced Sunday [10 May] that life has returned to normal in Mongalla, stating that large numbers of the outlaws have begun to surrender themselves to the Armed Forces.

Maj. Gen. Mahjub, in a press statement to SUNA, explained that the rebels of (Fajulu) tribe in the Lanya area [western Equatoria] have shown positive response to the revolution's calls for peace and the RCC [Revolution Command Council] chairman's declaration of amnesty, adding that they are willing to lay down their arms and join the peace march.

He pointed out that the area of Terakeka daily witnesses defection of large numbers of outlaws from the rebel movement.

The commander has called on all charity organizations to provide the returnees at Mongalla and Terakeka with relief, clothes, and agricultural equipment, which are necessary for the resettlement of those citizens.

Meanwhile, the commander of the Equatoria military area has underlined that the military operation in western Equatoria are progressing well.

Rebels Told To Surrender

E40505183092 Khartoum SUNA in English 0955 GMT
5 May 92

[Text] Kurdufan wali [governor] Major General al-Husayn 'Abd-al-Karim, announced that the rebels in south Kurdufan will be given a period of one week to surrender themselves and their weapons. After that, the Armed Forces and the People's Defense Forces will launch an attack against them. [This is] after the government's defeat of the rebels in the Tuleshi mountains and its sending them out of the eastern part of southern Kurdufan.

Al-Husayn said in a statement to the daily AL-INQADH AL-WATANI [government, NATIONAL SALVATION] that there is a flow of 300 returnees per day from the rebellion movement, along with their weapons. An operations center has been set up, headed by the deputy governor, to receive the returnees and to settle them in the peaceful villages.

He added that efforts have been exerted to achieve food security in the state through the rehabilitation of agricultural projects and the distribution of the uninvested [as received] projects, together with the construction of seed stores in the state.

He said that he is working to achieve security and stability, and a balanced development in rural areas, and to establish the application of shari'ah [Islamic law].

BANGLADESH

World Organizations Plan Refugee Aid

92AS0875A Dhaka *THE NEW NATION* in English
10 Mar 92 pp 1, 8

[Text] The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has launched a refugee assistance programme for the Burmese Muslim refugees crossing into Bangladesh from Myanmar, reports BSS [Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (Bangladesh News Agency)].

Presently, there are over 100,000 refugees which may reach two lakhs by the end of April 1992 if the exodus continue unabated, according to official sources in Dhaka yesterday.

The UNHCR has undertaken the refugee assistance programme at the formal invitation of Bangladesh government.

UNHCR has already released local resources equivalent to U.S. dollar 1.1 million as part of its total commitment of U.S. dollar 2.7 million from its emergency fund to defray the immediate expenditure.

A parliamentary need assessment has also been undertaken by the UNHCR for making an international appeal for increased assistance.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has also allocated U.S. dollar 1.9 million for procurement of food for immediate relief operation during the next 4 to 5 months. The WFP's programme of emergency operation has been further advanced and intensified at the request of Minister for Finance.

The European Community has expressed concern over such growing influx of Myanmar refugees into Bangladesh. The government is trying to solve the matter bilaterally and in a peaceful manner.

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) mission yesterday assured that it would take all possible measures to provide succour and relief to the Rohingya Muslim refugees in Bangladesh.

The assurance was given yesterday when the IDB mission led by its Director Hassan M. Jeng called on Economic Relations Division Secretary Enam A. Chowdhury at his office in Dhaka.

The mission, during its stay in Bangladesh, will make an on-the-spot assessment of the extent and dimension of the problems of the Rohingya Muslim refugees and devise ways and means for extending succour to the distressed humanity.

The IDB mission assured that the bank would take all possible measures to assist Bangladesh and appreciated the steps taken so far by the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia. ERD [External Resources Division] Secretary Enam A. Chowdhury told BSS yesterday morning after the meeting.

The condition of the Burmese refugees was brought to light in the IDB board of governors 16th meeting held in Tripoli last month which was attended by Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman as member of the board of governors and the ERD Secretary as Alternate Governor. The President of IDB and all other members of the board had expressed deep concern about the inhuman treatment to the Rohingya Muslims by Burmese authority.

The mission will be visiting border areas and refugees camps and see for themselves the distress and sufferings of the refugees.

The ERD Secretary told the mission that despite the fact, the government of Bangladesh had been trying to tackle the problem, the sheer size, magnitude and invincibility of it have compelled the government to seek international cooperation. Besides, being a human problem it was not limited to Bangladesh alone.

UNB adds: UNHCR will soon begin airlifting of relief materials for the Myanmar refugees sheltered in Bandarban and Cox's Bazar districts, an official of UNHCR's local mission said yesterday.

The relief goods, particularly blankets and construction materials, will be carried to the refugee-flooded areas from different points in chartered aircraft.

The mission has chalked out a programme to put up refugee camps in 80 hectares of land at Nayapara in Cox's Bazar.

Vietnam-based UN Border Refugee Organisation (UNBRO) will help in setting up the camps, the official said.

Refugees List

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday handed a list of 9,833 Myanmar refugees in Bangladesh to the Burmese Embassy here. Foreign Office sources said.

This is the fifth list of the refugees submitted to the Burmese Embassy.

The government has so far forwarded lists of 23,268 refugees in five installments to the Burmese mission to start the process of quick repatriation as agreed by the two countries during Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman's visit to Burma last November.

The embassy will be provided with lists of more refugees soon, the sources said.

UK's condemnation

Britain has flayed the Burmese military regime for perpetrating persecution on thousands of Rohingya Muslims that forced them to flee their homeland.

Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Douglas Hogg made a statement in the House of

Commons recently deploring the situation, said a press release issued by the British High Commission in Dhaka yesterday.

"We deplore the continuing intransigence of the Burmese military authorities," Hogg said.

The British State Minister denounced the Burmese junta's brutal activities. "Their human rights record, and their failure, to fulfil their avowed commitment to the democratic process, makes them an international pariah."

He urged Rangoon to respond to "the growing criticism of their policies."

U.S. Government

Another report adds: The United States has been in close touch with Bangladesh government since the beginning of the Rohingya refugee problem on providing assistance, a USIS [U.S. Information Service] press release said yesterday.

Quoting a statement issued by the State Department recently, USIS said the embassy officials had visited the refugee-flooded areas to assess the condition and make recommendation for U.S. assistance.

"We have raised our concern to the Burmese government in Rangoon," said the U.S. State Department.

The USIS release said United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with active U.S. support is coordinating relief for the vulnerable population.

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies has issued an appeal for 2.2 million U.S. dollars for food, clothing, blankets and other relief supplies for the refugees.

Hasina Announces Awami League's Economic Policy

92AS0948A Dhaka *THE NEW NATION* in English
20 Mar 92 pp 1, 8

[Text] Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Shaykh Hasina yesterday announced the party's new economic policy consistent with the needs of people in the backdrop of changed global economic scenario.

Announcing the economic policy at an iftar party largely attended by editors of national dailies and news agencies and senior journalists at her official residence here, she said the policy was formulated in consultation with the business leaders, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI), Dhaka Stock Exchange, leading economists and trade union leaders.

Earlier, Awami League's Economic and Planning Secretary Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser presented in brief an outline of the economic policy providing a sense of

direction to save the economy from erosion. The draft policy calls for creation of competitive economy based on efficient management, economic effectiveness and social needs. The party was of the opinion that the role of the government in the economic sector should be complementary rather than regulatory as under socialism.

Shaykh Hasina said the new economic policy has been modelled on free market economy. It seems that the party discarded its tilt towards the socialistic economy in view of the changed global economic condition.

She said all-out efforts would be made to encourage proper management of nationalised sector, growth of free private entrepreneurship and cooperatives.

Shaykh Hasina said unless we overcome the economic backwardness and instability, curse of poverty and unemployment and reduce dependence on others, not only the socio-economic sector would be affected seriously but also all efforts to establish the democratic process on a strong footing would face a continued threat.

She said people should arrive at a consensus on the programmes for national reconstruction for achieving increased rate of GDP [Gross Domestic Product], equitable distribution of wealth and on ensuring people's participation in development process and in attaining self-sufficiency.

The draft policy said no financial institution or industry would be nationalised and steps should be taken to make the existing losing public sector concerned profitable in keeping with a competitive economy.

Explaining the party's changed economic policy, Shaykh Hasina said an environment for effective and competitive market would have to be created for accelerating the pace of desired economic development. She said no particular quarters should be allowed to reap benefit of the competitive market.

The policy calls for promotion of foreign investment in industrial sector and as an incentive to it, wants development of export-oriented industries on priority basis.

It also recommended measures so that nothing comes in the way of development of export-oriented industries and necessary assistance should be extended to those involved in this sector.

The policy stressed the need for restructuring taxation and revenue policies and reduction of unproductive public expenditure to the minimum as part of efforts to mobilise greater internal resources.

The party recommended simplification of imports of raw materials necessary for domestic industries and restructuring of import duty on the basis of just economic needs.

It recommended health, education and shelter-for-all through taking up various programmes. It puts emphasis

on the revival of rural economy creating improved infrastructure and introducing developed technology for agricultural uplift.

About agriculture, the policy called for increased development expenditure in agriculture on a priority basis. In this context it recommended expansion of irrigation network and high-yielding variety crop for attaining food autarky. With this end in view, a policy for an effective distribution system, subsidised procurement market and storage will be adopted to ensure adequate supply of agricultural input and for striking balance between prices of farm output and input.

The policy attached priority to strong private sector. It also stressed on running public sector by skilled management and flourishing of the private sector by efficient and genuine entrepreneurs.

The policy said the export-oriented industrial undertakings will be considered as emergency sector to increase volume of exports as well as attract foreign investments. Besides, promoters of small and cottage industries will be provided with adequate financial and technological supports. It recommended minimum wages for the industrial workers.

The economic policy stressed the need for effective utilisation of foreign aid by maximum mobilisation of domestic resources with a commitment to recast the revenue and tax policy.

The policy outlines that austerity measures will be adopted and expenditure on unproductive sector will be curbed and steps will be taken to attain a self-reliant economy curbing dependence on foreign aid. Procedure of importing raw materials for indigenous industries will be simplified to ensure industrial development.

The Awami League's economic policy stipulates that steps will be taken to make the financial institutions effective to promote savings and investment. Besides, a congenial investment climate will be created by adopting correct monetary policy, interest rate and its structure removing discrepancy between the interest rates of short and long-term credits.

About development of human resources, special attention will be given to education, social welfare and cultural sector so that poor people could be benefited. In this context, programmes on education, health and family planning will be geared up to boost rural economy, proper communication network will be built in the rural areas to help stimulate rural economy.

The policy underlines that effective steps will be initiated to execute the projects of Jamuna multipurpose bridge and Meghna—Gumti bridge and bridges will be constructed on important rivers including the Padma and the Rupsa.

About sharing of waters, the policy says that efforts will be made to seek long term solution to the problem of water sharing and flooding through negotiation with the neighbouring countries.

All-out efforts will be made for exploration of natural resources like oil, gas, coal and other resources and if necessary, foreign technology and assistance will be accepted for this purpose.

It put emphasis on regional cooperation in the interest of national development.

Reports, Comment on Zia's Visit to U.S.

Talks at UN

92AS0951A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
22 Mar 92 pp 1, 8

[Text] United Nations Secretary General Boutros-Ghali has assured United Nations support to Bangladesh for solving the Rohingya refugee problem through political means.

The assurance came when Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia met him at his office at the United Nations Headquarters here on Friday.

The Secretary General informed the Prime Minister that in order to find a solution, the United Nations would adopt a "step-by-step" approach for assessment of the overall situation and repatriation of the refugees to their homeland. He said the United Nations would endeavour to achieve a political solution to the crisis not merely for the time being but for future as well.

Mr. Ghali mentioned that Ambassador Jan Eciasan, the newly appointed Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs, was working to find out means to solve the problem.

Highlighting the Rohingya problem, Begum Zia said the number of refugees to Bangladesh had already exceeded two lakh. Bangladesh was doing its best to look after them despite limited resources, she told the Secretary General.

She said Bangladesh was endeavouring to solve the problem peacefully. She said the Myanmar Foreign Minister was invited to visit Bangladesh to hold talks on this issue to resolve the crisis. She regretted that there had been no response from the Myanmar side.

Begum Zia said the military build-up in Myanmar had further complicated the situation. "The build-up is not only a matter of concern to Bangladesh, it has threatened peace and stability in the region," she observed.

Begum Zia said it was at this point Bangladesh was forced to appeal to the international community to help resolve the problem. She thanked the UNHCR [United Nations High Commission for Refugees] for the statement and appeal to the international community in this regard.

Begum Khaleda Zia expressed her appreciation for the Secretary General's role and effort but underlined that urgently of the problem needed to maintain pressure through preventive diplomacy.

Mr. Ghali appreciated Bangladesh's contribution to the United Nations peace keeping role in Namibia, Iraq, Iran and Cambodia.

The Prime Minister congratulated Mr. Ghali for becoming the Secretary General of the United Nations and extended an invitation to him to visit Bangladesh. She thanked him for the assistance extended by the United Nations to Bangladesh in various fields. She outlined the difficulties her government was facing right from the cyclone of April last year which was followed by floods.

"Due to the international community's help including the assistance from the United Nations and resilience and courage of the people, Bangladesh could overcome the disaster," she said.

Foreign Minister A S M Mustafizur Rahman, Information Minister Najmul Huda and Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the United Nations Humayun Kabir were, among others, present.

The Prime Minister also met United Nations General Assembly President Samir Shahbi and congratulated him for his election. She explained to him the situation obtaining in Bangladesh out of the Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. She called for support and cooperation of the international community to resolve the crisis.

She also urged the UNGA President to help mobilise support for Bangladesh to put pressure on the Myanmar authority to take back their citizens.

Interview

AFP says from New York: Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia urged the international community Friday to aid her country in coping with a massive influx of refugees from neighbouring Burma.

In an interview with a U.S. news agency, Begum Zia said the need for assistance was urgent since the tens of thousands of Myanmar Muslims, fleeing reported military persecution in their country, had settled in an area which last year was whipped by a monsoon that killed 130,000 people.

"We have tried to resolve this issue diplomatically by peaceful means. Myanmar has mobilised troops on our borders. It has attacked our border outposts. It has engaged in provocative action," the Prime Minister said.

"We are now seeking the intervention of other countries so that the refugees can return home in dignity and safety," she said.

She rejected the idea of a military response to the problem, stressing "this is a humanitarian issue. We do not want to create misery for those people who have already suffered enough."

UNDP Chief

BSS report from New York says: The Administrator of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Mr. William Drapper, called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her hotel suite on Friday and assured UNDP's full cooperation to the democratic government in Bangladesh for attaining its socio-economic objectives.

Mr. Drapper hoped that the bureaucratic inertia would be overcome by the present government and new projects would be undertaken for human resources development and poverty alleviation.

Press Conference on Return

92AS0951B Dhaka *THE NEW NATION* in English
24 Mar 92 pp 1, 8

[Text] Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday described her visit to the United States as "very fruitful" and said she found broad international support and sympathy for the Myanmar refugee problem, reports BSS.

She told a press conference at the Zia International Airport on return from the visit that the talks she had with United States President George Bush and other dignitaries went off "very well."

Flanked by Information Minister Barrister Najmul Huda and Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, the Prime Minister said she had substantial discussions covering a wide range of issues in Washington and later at the United Nations, New York.

Begum Zia said discussions in the United States capital with the Senate members, chiefs of World Bank and International Monetary Fund were very useful.

The talks with President Bush, at whose invitation she made the visit, covered wide grounds.

The Prime Minister's entourage during the five-day visit included Foreign Minister A S M Mustafizur Rahman and Information Minister Barrister Najmul Huda.

The Foreign Minister stayed back in New York for consultations on the Myanmar refugee issue with concerned quarters.

Responding to questions, Begum Zia said the United States President and the Secretary General of the United Nations had identified the Myanmar refugee issue as a "major problem" and added that the United Nations Secretary General would soon dispatch a coordinator for dealing with the refugee problem.

She told a questioner that Dhaka favoured solution of the issue through discussions and was making every effort towards that direction.

Asked whether Bangladesh was contemplating any military action to solve the problem, the Prime Minister answered in the negative and said scopes for resolution of the problem through talks had not been exhausted.

She said Myanmar is learnt to have built up military preparedness and wondered what purpose such build-up could serve for that country.

When her attention was drawn to the fact that late President Ziaur Rahman solved a similar problem with Myanmar in 1979 through diplomatic endeavour, the Prime Minister said the present government also threw its entire weight to resolve the problem diplomatically.

It is evident from our efforts, Begum Zia said and stressed on the early solution of the refugee problem since the onset of monsoon would compound the woes of refugees.

She dismissed suggestions that her meeting with the United States Defence Secretary Dick Cheney had to do anything about military solution of the refugee problem and said it was meant to express thanks for the services U.S. task force rendered in the cyclone hit areas last year.

The Prime Minister reiterated that Bangladesh could not look after the huge number of refugees who poured into the country from Myanmar and made it clear they would have to go back to their country.

"We are making every effort to create conditions for this purpose" Begum Zia said.

Replying to a question about her talks with the chief of the World Bank and the IMF [International Monetary Fund], she said it was true that such agencies often attached conditionalities to their loans but added that Bangladesh did not accept all these strings.

Begum Zia said aid flow has increased and blamed the previous autocratic regime for tarnishing the image of the nation to the donors and international organisations for its whimsical and corrupt financial policies.

Asked if she had talks with the U.N. Secretary General on the water issue with India, the Prime Minister said the matter was being dealt with bilaterally. She said time had not come to raise the issue at international forums.

Begum Zia told another questioner that Bangladesh had earned laurels from international community for its participation in the maintenance of peace as reflected by its despatch of troops to such crucial areas like the United Nations sponsored Iraq-Iran peace and the Namibian independence.

The Prime Minister said during her visit to the United States she met the Bangladeshi community and was warmly moved by their reception.

She also gave interviews to U.S. media like the New York Times, AP, Washington Post and spoke mainly about resurgent democracy in Bangladesh.

Friendship Reinforced

92AS0951C Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
23 Mar 92 p 5

[Editorial] In the midst of the U.S. leadership's election year preoccupations, the reception accorded to Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in Washington is a tribute paid to an elected head of a representative government replacing an autocracy after an arduous struggle.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister's talks with the U.S. President George Bush, Capitol Hill senators, relevant Foreign Relations Committee functionaries and U.S. Aid, World Bank and IMF dignitaries went well with a noticeable departure from the past in the degree of attention evidenced towards her as a mark of special prestige that an elected government leader enjoys.

The Prime Minister's tour of the United States synchronises with the first anniversary of the induction of an elected government in the country. Democracy is still fragile and some fundamental socioeconomic problems are still to be thrashed. The economy whose ailments were not of the present government's making was further burdened with the sudden influx of two lakh Rohingya refugees from Burma. Bangladesh persists in its quest for a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the problem and it requires considerable diplomatic pressure to be brought to bear upon the autocratic and quasi-racist Burmese junta.

All indications suggest that the Prime Minister's visit was fruitful. During her hourlong talks with George Bush she received from the U.S. President a strong commitment to help strengthen democracy and promote economic development in Bangladesh as well as continue economic and food aid. The two leaders deplored the action of the Burmese government leading to the massive influx of Muslim refugees. President Bush pledged Washington's support for the refugees in response to the appeal made by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, as was disclosed after the talks. The question of Burma's military buildup was also discussed.

The United Nations Secretary General Boutros Ghali in his talks with Begum Zia assured her of seeking a political solution to the Rohingya refugee crisis "not merely for the time being but for future as well."

In a statement at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Begum Zia renewed Bangladesh's pledge to work with the United States and other friendly countries in a common effort towards a better, more peaceful and prosperous world for the benefit of all mankind. She emphasised the need for this country's access to foreign markets, technology and resources on acceptable terms. She referred to the liberal industrial policy adopted by

this country for encouraging private enterprise and attracting foreign investment.

Bangladesh's highest priorities are development and political stability. The United States seems to be well aware of this. The United States is not only the principal source of aid, now it is also the biggest market of our garment exports. Recently the world's aid climate has not been very cheering as far as this part of the world is concerned, in consequence of the competing claim by the countries of East Europe after dissolution of the Soviet Union. In this situation, President Bush's pledge of continued economic support is doubly reassuring. We trust the reinforcement of friendly U.S.-Bangladesh relations, as signalled by the Prime Minister's tour of the United States, will yield result in tangible terms in future months and years.

Proceedings of 18 Mar Border Talks Reported

92AS0949A Dhaka *THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER* in English 22 Mar 92 p 3

[Text] Border coordination conference between Bangladesh and India began at Khulna on Wednesday morning, reports BSS.

The Bangladesh delegation was led by Brigadier TU Muhammad Iftakharul Bashar, Deputy Director General of Bangladesh Rifles and assisted by Colonel Mohammad Shamsuzzahan Chowdhury, PSO [Principal Staff Officer], Director Operations and Training. The delegation included Sector Commanders of Rajshahi, Comilla, Khulna, Rangamati, Sylhet, Dinajpur, Bheramara, Khagrachari and Staff Officers of headquarters, Bangladesh Rifles.

The Indian side was headed by Mr. Sankar Sen, IPS [Indian Police Service], Additional Director General of Border Security Forces of South Bengal and Tripura Kachar and Mizoram frontiers. The members of his delegation included Deputy Inspector General of Maldha, Krishnanagar, Calcutta, Tripura (North) and Tripura (South) Mizoram and Kachar in addition to staff officer of their headquarters, a BDR [Bangladesh Rifles] press release said in Dhaka.

The conference began in the spirit of traditional cordiality existing between the two friendly forces. The key issue figuring the conference was transborder crimes, their specific identification and effective counter measures to put a check on these. Matters related to smuggling, law and order situation in border areas, miscreant activities, trespass, violation of border guideline, cattle lifting, land disputes, kidnapping, killing, dacoity, maintenance of border pillar and allied matters figured prominently among other subjects.

After threadbare deliberation on the issues, both sides agreed to take stringent measures to further secure their respective frontiers to apprehend criminals. Both forces also decided to exchange information regarding smugglers and their affiliated organisations in respective

areas. Minor irritants were also ironed out and it was also decided that regular border meeting must be held at sector and battalion level between the respective security forces to solve matters requiring immediate attention.

The conference ended with the understanding that in the days to come Bangladesh Rifles and the Border Security Force of India would further consolidate and strengthen their effort in keeping their respective border free from crime and disorder, thereby ensuring peace and tranquillity.

World Bank Approves Grant To Promote Exports

92AS0964A Dhaka *THE NEW NATION* in English 23 Mar 92 pp 1, 8

[Text] World Bank, in its efforts to revamp the privatisation programme of the government, has okayed a 25.5 million dollar fund. The fund will be distributed among commercial banks specially private sector banks for financing viable export-oriented industrial projects under industrial programme of the government.

Sources said that the fund for boosting private sector industrial projects will be supported by second industrial sector credit amounting to 190 million dollar. World Bank has already assured disbursement of both the credits to enable potential entrepreneurs in the private sector set up export oriented and import substitute industries.

The modalities for getting World Bank credits were clearly defined earlier. Bangladesh could not avail the fund during last few years due to poor performance of existing industrial units. The industrial units in the private sector were grappling with resource constraints since their installation. Nationalised Commercial Banks (NCBs) and Development Financial Institutions (DFIs) found it nonviable to pump more money into sick private sector units to avoid further complications with recovery of overdue loans. The entrepreneurs, on the other hand, remained as watchdogs in the situation.

The industrial policy '91 has provided opportunities to the potential exporters to set up export oriented units. The facilities to the entrepreneurs include a ten year tax holiday, procurement of imported raw materials at concessional rate and subsidies on exports. The industrial policy has stressed on diversification of export oriented goods and suggests creation of new markets for nontraditional items except garments.

The industrial sector credit to be provided by the donors in the next Budget (1992-93) will help create a solid industrial base in the country. Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) estates will be preferred for setting up of industries in the new set up. Sources said that the industrial sector credit will be disbursed following a meeting of World Bank representatives with Bangladeshi counterparts in Washington to be held tentatively on 26 April '92. The donors have reportedly approved the disbursement of industrial

sector credit as Bangladesh has fulfilled most of the prerequisites for getting such credits.

Sources said that a [figure indistinct] dollar technical assistance will be provided by the World Bank to ensure pollution control in the industrial zones on experimental basis. The amount to be procured by the concerned industries will help chart out a future programme for controlling industrial pollutants at the plant level.

Meanwhile, industrial restructuring programme of the World Bank has received mixed reaction from the industrial workers and trade unions in recent months. The World Bank has already expressed its readiness to finance the restructuring of sick public sector units. Sources believe that part of the 190 million dollars earmarked for industrial sector credit would be spent for the purpose. The restructuring plan envisages reduction in workforce in the public sector enterprises by 20 percent at the first stage. The success of restructuring plan will depend on its acceptance by the workers and the trade unions concerned.

The World Bank has asked the Ministry of Industries to derive opinions of different chambers and trade bodies with regard to restructuring of loss-making public sector enterprises. The views of different chambers will be considered in any programme of industrial restructuring in the near future, sources said.

Sources told this correspondent that the Industrial Policy '91 will be slightly revised to the advantage of entrepreneurs.

Works on projects costing about Taka 10 crore were done during the period of these three Administrators and Mayor of Dhaka without calling any tender. The allotments of shops in the city markets were made to favour relatives of them and partymen.

The budget of the DCC [District Congress Committee] during the tenure of these three ministers of Ershad Cabinet were drafted and announced without following rules. They maintained no record of revenue earning, the White Paper revealed.

Details of Economic Pact With DPRK Given

92AS0965A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 24 Mar 92 p 10

[Text] Bangladesh and North Korea (DPRK) signed an agreement to set up a Joint Economic Commission (JEC) to promote and identify different areas for further economic, trade and technical cooperation, says BSS.

It was signed after the talks between Bangladesh side and the visiting DPRK delegation in Dhaka Monday noon at the NEC conference room. Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman, leader of Bangladesh delegation and the DPRK delegation leader and Minister Chong Song-Nam, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective government.

Economic Relations Division [ERD] Secretary Enam Ahmed Chowdhury was present at the talks.

At the talks, two technical committees were formed to work out the details of bilateral cooperation. These are economic and technical subcommittee and trade and investment subcommittee.

Stressing the need for new areas of cooperation, the DPRK Minister said the people of North Korea were keen to see progress under the leadership of democratically elected Government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia. We are eager to further expand and strengthen economic, trade and technical cooperation with Bangladesh, he said.

Mr. Saifur Rahman, appreciated the good beginning of the process of unification of North and South Korea and hoped that if Korea becomes one nation, it would open up broader areas for economic, trade and technical relations with Bangladesh.

The North Korean side expressed their keenness in cooperating with Bangladesh in coal and hardrock extraction.

Earlier, the leader of the visiting four-member DPRK delegation met the Finance Minister in Dhaka Monday morning.

The Finance Minister raised the Rohingya Muslim problem now being faced by Bangladesh. He urged the DPRK Government to use its good offices to pursue the Myanmar authorities to resolve the problem peacefully.

The DPRK Minister appreciated the steps, taken by the Bangladesh Government in resolving the issue peacefully and hoped good sense would prevail upon the Myanmar authorities.

The DPRK Minister also met the ERD Secretary Monday morning at the latter's office. They discussed the modus operandi of the economic, trade and technical cooperation between Bangladesh and the DPRK.

Later, the DPRK Minister met Majedul Haq, Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control. They decided to extend areas of cooperation for agriculture development of the two countries. Preservation of perishable agricultural items like potatoes, vegetables, modernisation and mechanisation of agricultural equipment and irrigation methods had been identified as the main areas of cooperation between the two countries.

The Ambassador of North Korea Kang Tae-son and senior officials of Bangladesh and North Korea were present on the occasion.

The DPRK Minister said a Joint Economic Commission had been constituted between the two countries emphasizing the cooperation in the field of agriculture.

Zia Message on Independence Day Reported

92AS0967A Dhaka *THE NEW NATION* in English
26 Mar 92 pp 1, 8

[Text] Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Wednesday called upon the people to put in their best for building a happy, prosperous and democratic Bangladesh rejuvenated with the spirit of the war of Independence, reports BSS.

In a message on the occasion of the Independence and National Day, Begum Zia said, "Let us remain above all divisive tendencies, malices wavering and conflict and build a solid foundation of national cohesion by unitedly giving democracy a permanent institutional shape."

She said, "Let the attainment of autarky in all spheres of national life be the vow of this year's independence celebration." The Prime Minister said the main spirit of our struggle for independence was to establish a happy, contented democratic society. She said imbued with this spirit, our people, irrespective of ideology and opinion, relentlessly fought against autocracy to reestablish democracy in the country.

Begum Zia said it had accorded us a new dignity as an independent, sovereign and democracy loving nation in the international arena.

She, however, said the hard-earned democracy could be consolidated and take institutional shape only when he [as published] would be able to achieve economic emancipation of our masses. She said her government had devoted all its energies toward this end.

The Prime Minister referred to various steps taken up by her government to attain food autarky, alleviation of poverty, rapid industrialisation and spread of education.

"We have taken programmes and policies for involving our womenfolk in the mainstream of national development," she said. She said her government also laid stress on the maintenance of law and order in the interest of uninterrupted development.

Referring to the foreign policy, Begum Zia said the guiding principle of our foreign policy was to promote global peace based on mutual understanding and friendship among all nations through close collaboration with various international fora including the United Nations, OIC [Organisation of Islamic Conference], NAM [Non-aligned Movement] and the Commonwealth. "Under the umbrella of SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation], concerted moves have been taken place for regional peace and stability along with the improvement of quality of life of the people of our region," she said.

Begum Zia recalled with deep gratitude and respect the sacrifices of millions of martyrs for the sun spangled banner of our independence. She also prayed for the peace of the departed souls.

The Prime Minister felicitated the countrymen both at home and abroad, on the momentous occasion of the 21st anniversary of the glorious independence.

She prayed for the continued peace, prosperity, happiness and success of the countrymen.

Accord To Lease Out Tinbigha Signed

92AS0969A Dhaka *THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER*
in English 28 Mar 92 p 1

[Text] Bangladesh and India have signed an agreement for leasing out Tinbigha, [text illegible] in Dhaka said.

The agreement concluded on Thursday in New Delhi after a series of negotiations at different levels in the last 18 years, will be effective from June 26. It will enable Bangladesh to link its enclaves Dahagram and Angarpota.

Indian Foreign Secretary J.N Dixit and Bangladesh Additional Foreign Secretary AH Mahmood Ali initialled the accord on behalf of their respective governments.

Indian External Affairs Minister Madhavsingh Solanki, told the Lok Sabha on Thursday that India and Bangladesh exchanged letters earlier in the day for implementation of the lease providing the Tinbigha corridor the agreement for which was signed 10 years back.

He, however, said the sovereignty of the area will continue to vest in India.

Dhaka and New Delhi reached the agreement to finalise the leasing of the corridor on the basis of the agreements between the two countries signed in 1974 and 1982.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman signed the Land Boundary Demarcation Agreement with Indira Gandhi in New Delhi during his visit to India from 12-16 May in 1974.

The then Commerce and Trade Minister, Khondker Mustaque Ahmed, and former Foreign Minister Dr. Kamal Hossain accompanied Sheikh Mujib during the trip.

Fourteenth para of the Article 1 of the agreement provides that India will retain the southern half of south Berubari Union No. 12 and the adjacent enclaves measuring an area of 2.64 square mile approximately, and in exchange Bangladesh will retain the Dahagram and Angarpota enclaves. India will lease in perpetuity to Bangladesh an area of 178 by 85 metres near Tinbigha to connect Dahagram with Panban Mouza PS Patgram of Bangladesh.

Another accord was signed between the two countries in 1982 to work out modalities for implementation of the 1974 agreement.

Bangladesh parliament promptly ratified the 1974 agreement and handed over south Berubari to India. But India is yet to endorse the accord even after a lapse of 18 years.

Indian Supreme Court in September, 1990, ruled that the Tinbigha corridor could be leased out to Bangladesh without ratification of the agreement by the parliament and asked the Government to implement it as quickly as possible.

Calcutta High Court had earlier given the verdict in favour of leasing out Tinbigha to Bangladesh when it was challenged.

The issue of the transfer of Tinbigha corridor to Bangladesh is one of the longstanding irritants between the two countries. Other issues are sharing of the Ganges water, determination of the ownership of South Talpatty island, the Chakma refugee problem and demarcation of land boundary and maritime boundary.

Body Formed To Resist Attacks on Newspapers

92AS0968A Dhaka *THE NEW NATION* in English
30 Mar 92 pp 1, 8

[Text] Leaders of Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Parishad [BSP], Editors Council, BFUJ [Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists], DUJ [Dhaka Union of Journalists], Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Press Sramik Federation [BSPSF] and Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Karmachari Federation [BSKF] in a joint statement yesterday strongly condemned recent armed attacks on newspaper offices and said newspapers should not be viewed from individual, group or partisan angle.

In a joint statement issued after a meeting of the leaders of the newspaper industry, they said that attack on newspaper offices for political reasons was not acceptable on any plea. They called upon the political parties and organisation not to involve the newspapers with any political incident.

The leaders said tolerance was the precondition of democracy and there should be no interference in the newspapers' right to freedom of expression. "We also want that intolerance and malice in politics should be stopped forthwith."

The newspaper industry leaders observed with great concern that a section of political parties and organisations were giving provocative statements. These are carried by newspapers as there is freedom of expression, they pointed out and said, tendency to attack newspaper offices on that consideration is regrettable.

They said newspapers are not party to any political clashes. It is not healthy politics to make newspapers victims of political wrath and attack newspaper employees. It is desirable that a change is brought about in this [text illegible], they said.

They said that it was not desirable also that newspapers became political weapons.

The newspaper industry leaders said there had been armed attacks on the offices of the Dainik Sangbad, Dainik Inqilab, Dainik Meillat, Dainik Al-Ameen, Dainik Sangram and Dainik Bhor where journalists and employees were subjected to assault and properties were damaged. We cannot consider their barbarian acts as normal behaviour, they said.

The newspaper industry leaders said it was not possible to continue publication of newspapers having been held hostage in the hands of terrorists.

They said the government had to take effective steps in maintaining normal law and order in the country as it was the responsibility of the government to ensure security to public life and properties.

"We cannot accept that the government will fail in discharging its responsibility in this respect and we will continue to be subjected to assault without making any hue and cry," they said.

The leaders expressed their firm pledge to preserve the hard earned freedom of the press.

Earlier, the meeting of the newspaper industry leaders with Sanaullah Noori in the chair formed a 12-member committee to resist attack on newspaper offices and protect the freedom of the press.

The 12-member committee includes Barrister Mainul Hossain, President, BSP-Convenor, Joint Convenors—Sanaullah Noori, President Editors Council and Rezauddin Ahmed, President BFUJ, Members—BSP Secretary General Anwarul Islam, Editors Council General Secretary A Q M Jainul Abedin, BFUJ Secretary General Amanullah Kabir, DUJ President Shahjahan Miah, DUJ General Secretary Altaf Mahmud, President and the Secretary General of Sangbadpatra Press Sramik Federation Mosharaf Hossain and Bazlur Rahman Milon and Sangbadpatra Karmachari, Federation President Jahangir Kabir and General Secretary Mozammel Hoq.

UN Secretary General Sends Envoy to Dhaka

1 Apr Talks

92AS0952A Dhaka *THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER*
in English 1 Apr 92 p 1

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] UN Secretary General's Special Envoy Jan Eliasson on Tuesday assured United Nation's "necessary help" to meet the Rohingya refugees problems, reports BSS.

"I assure you that my colleagues in the United Nations family who are present here now including the UNHCR [United Nations High Commission for Refugees] will provide necessary help to meet the situation," Eliasson

told Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia when he called on her at her office this morning.

Mr. Eliasson, who has been dispatched by the U.N. Secretary General for an on-the-spot assessment of refugee problem, said "I assure you that I will do my best to turn the tide to a positive side for a solution of the problem."

He said it might be a beginning of the process of bilateral discussion through U.N. auspices.

The special envoy, who leaves Dhaka for Rangoon on Thursday, said we would assess the situation there and see "If it could be made favourable for return and rehabilitation of the refugees." He indicated that if necessary there would be presence of U.N. representatives on the other side of the border so that refugees could go back home safely.

The Special Envoy said the world community appreciated Bangladesh's efforts and reception of the Myanmar refugees on its soil. He lauded the efforts of Begum Zia's government for handling the issue bilaterally.

Mr. Jan Eliasson, who is U.N. Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, conveyed the greeting of Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to Begum Zia where Mr. Ghali appreciated her visit to the United States and meeting with the Secretary General.

Welcoming the Special Envoy, Begum Zia said the visit was timely. She said Bangladesh which is already overpopulated, could not handle such huge refugees. "We cannot bear the burden of such a huge additional people for long," she said adding "moreover the situation will take a serious turn with the on-set of monsoon."

Expressing her Government's firm commitment to solve the problem bilaterally, the Prime Minister said Bangladesh Foreign Minister had visited Myanmar but there had been no response from their side.

She said that moreover our border outposts were attacked. Begum Zia said Myanmar authorities were now trying to 'dress up' in the face of international pressure on them. "They were behaving in such a manner as if nothing had happened," she said.

The Prime Minister reiterated Bangladesh's stand to solve the problem through negotiations and said "we are open to any sort of bilateral discussion to resolve the problem."

Foreign Minister A.S.M. Mustafizur Rahman was also present on the occasion.

Meeting With Mostafiz

UNB adds: The United Nations has assured Bangladesh of its best efforts towards finding a peaceful solution of the Burmese refugee problem.

The assurance came at official talks between Foreign Minister A.S.M. Mustafizur Rahman and the visiting

U.N. special envoy Jan K. Eliasson at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday.

The U.N. Under Secretary General for Human Affairs was briefed about the severity of the problem and plight of the refugees, said a Foreign Office spokesman after the one-and-a-half-hour meeting.

Eliasson, who flew in Dhaka on Monday as a special envoy of the U.N. Secretary General, told the meeting that "I will do my best to find a peaceful solution of the problem acceptable to both countries."

He referred to the meeting between Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Secretary General Boutros-Ghali at the U.N. headquarters last month, which highlighted three aspects of the problem—human suffering, settlement of the refugees and durable solution of the issue.

At the Khaleda-Ghali meeting, the influx of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh was described as "a serious global situation" and the U.N. move to settle the issue "a test case of preventive diplomacy."

The preventive diplomacy as conceived in the January summit of the Security Council members "means to avert crises, contain situation and continue peace-making and peace-keeping."

"I am moving forward in search of a solution in line with the spirit of this concept," the U.N. envoy told the Foreign Minister.

Eliasson arrived in Dhaka Monday on the first leg of his two-nation tour aimed at resolving the refugee problem arising from a large-scale influx of Burmese Rohingya Muslims into Bangladesh.

Officials said more than 200,000 Rohingya Muslims have so far crossed into Bangladesh to escape persecution by the Burmese military junta.

Winding up his mission in Bangladesh, he will fly to Rangoon on Thursday to discuss with the Burmese authorities early repatriation of the refugees.

The U.N. Secretary General is expected to take measure in dealing with the problem on the basis of the recommendations to be submitted by Eliasson on his return to the U.N. headquarters.

The Foreign Minister at the meeting on Tuesday expressed satisfaction over the quick response of the U.N. to Bangladesh's call for exercising its influence in bringing about early solution of the problem.

Mustafizur assured the government's fullest cooperation with the mission.

Final Talks

92AS0952B Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 2 Apr 92 pp 1, 10

[Text] The visiting special envoy of the United Nations Secretary General on Wednesday held final round of talks with Foreign Minister A.S.M. Mustafizur Rahman on different aspects of the Myanmar Muslim refugee problem, reports BSS.

The first round of talks took place in Dhaka on Tuesday while the final round of the discussions followed the special envoy, Mr. Jan Eliasson's visit to the camps where the refugees have been sheltered.

The Foreign Minister told Mr. Eliasson, who is also the U.N. Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, that he had total confidence that the mission of the special envoy would produce positive results, official sources said.

Mr. Eliasson narrated his experience of the visits to the camps and stressed on the need for "safe and voluntary" return of the refugees to their homes.

The special envoy was dispatched by U.N. Secretary General Mr. Boutros Ghali following his talks with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia during the Prime Minister's recent visit to New York.

Mr. Eliasson leaves Dhaka today (Thursday) for Rangoon at the end of his three-day visit during which he held talks with Bangladesh side and visited the refugees in the camps.

Expectedly, his visit to Myanmar would facilitate a solution of the refugee problem. The special envoy had earlier said that the influx of the refugees caused great dismay in the international community and his mission was to find an acceptable resolution of the problem.

U.N. Ready To Play Catalytic Role

Another report from Cox's Bazar adds: U.N. emissary Jan K. Eliasson said here on Wednesday the United Nations was ready to play a catalytic role in finding negotiated settlement of the refugee problem provided Bangladesh and Myanmar make such a request.

Talking to BSS. After his visit to some of the Myanmar refugee camps here the U.N. Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs said, "the main purpose of my visit is to get a concrete view of the problem," giving his immediate reaction of the plight of the refugees he had. "I had interesting and moving experience."

Describing his visit to Dechuapalong-2 and Damdama-2 refugee camps as very rewarding experiences and important, Mr. Eliasson said, "the figures I heard in reports are now translated into human beings." He said the U.N. will do its utmost to help Bangladesh Government in dealing with the gigantic problem. He was optimistic of

favourable response from the International Community to the appeal for quick assistance for the refugees before the monsoon.

Asked if he was convinced that the refugees were from Myanmar, the U.N. emissary said, "it is evident they are coming from Myanmar side. They have shown a large number of Documents though I could not read their language."

Mr. Eliasson said U.N. would try to achieve the return of the refugees under safe and voluntary conditions as soon as possible. Asked if he could give any probable time frame of the solution of the problem, he said, "I can only say that the U.N. would do its best to find the solution. I need to continue talks with the Myanmar authorities."

When asked if the U.N. would pressurise Rangoon authorities for violations of human rights and persecution of political dissidents, he said, "My mission is to find a solution to the humanitarian problem between Bangladesh and Myanmar, in that way a positive trend begins. [sentence as published]"

In this connection, the visiting U.N. emissary said he was optimistic of slowing the degree of inflow of refugees. Mr. Eliasson said he was fully convinced of the tremendous pressure put on Bangladesh economy and its environment and ecology. He said he was highly impressed by the efforts of the Bangladesh Government, U.N. agencies, and NGO's [Non Government Officials] in providing assistance to the refugees.

Women refugees in Dechuapalong and Damdama camps narrated stories of rape, murder and loot when the U.N. emissary visited them. Many of the refugees burst into tears while recalling their nightmarish experiences. He talked to some of the refugees through an interpreter and asked them the reasons of fleeing their native land. The refugees said they were forced to flee in the face of repression.

Mr. Eliasson said he had very interesting talks with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, Foreign Minister A.S.M. Mustafizur Rahman and officials of the Foreign Minister.

State Minister for Relief Luftur Rahman Khan and Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman were among others, who accompanied Mr. Eliasson on the trip.

Meeting With Press

92AS0952C Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 3 Apr 92 p 1

[Text] Special envoy of the U.N. Secretary General Mr. Jan Eliasson on Thursday stressed the need for a lasting solution to the Rohingya refugee issue by ensuring "voluntary and safe" return of the refugees to their homeland in Myanmar. He favoured a peaceful solution to the problem "as soon as possible" as the monsoon would aggravate the woes of the refugees in the camps.

Narrating his experience after visiting the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Mr. Eliasson, also the Under Secretary General of the United Nations for Humanitarian Affairs, urged the international community to respond positively to help the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in raising a 27 million-dollar fund for the Rohingya refugees. He expressed satisfaction over the relief works in the refugee camps saying "the government and the U.N. Agencies are now doing excellent jobs there despite the existing limitations".

Addressing a Press conference at the end of his three-day visit to Bangladesh prior to his departure to Rangoon the U.N. special envoy termed his current mission "essentially a humanitarian one" and expressed optimism over the solution to the Rohingya refugee problem. He considered his talks with the government leaders here as "fruitful and productive". He said that during his talks with the Myanmar leaders today Friday he would try to impress them on the need for early and peaceful solution to the refugee issue. He informed that he had taken the current trip at the invitation of the two governments and at the end of his mission he would submit his report to the U.N. Secretary General on April 7.

Emphasising the need for "confidence building" between the two governments the U.N. Special Envoy said that the United Nations was ready to play a catalytic role to open bilateral dialogue between Dhaka and Rangoon for the peaceful solution of the refugee problem. He assured that the U.N. Secretary General would closely follow the developments till "we find a solution".

The U.N. Special Envoy said that following his visit to the refugee camps he realised the strain of the huge number of refugees on Bangladesh. He added that the United Nations and the international community were aware of the problem. He observed that the influx of the Rohingya refugees were now declining which he considered as a "good sign". He said that shelter and sanitation for the refugees were now the basic needs. He also suggested for a new camp site for the refugees.

Asked whether he had any time frame in his mind for the return of the Rohingya refugees the U.N. Special Envoy said "I can't give the time frame now but I can assure that I shall work hard to find a solution to the problem as soon as possible". Replying to a question whether he would try to impress the Myanmar government to reduce the tension created by its military build up along the Bangladesh border, the U.N. Special Envoy said that his current mission was a humanitarian one to find out a solution to the refugee issue. He, however, added that he would discuss the whole range of the issue during his talks with the leader in Myanmar. Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman and Additional Foreign Secretary Farooque Sobhan, UNDP [United Nations Development Program] resident representative in Dhaka Charles Larsimont and the chief of the UNHCR [United Nations

High Commission for Refugees] mission here Darius Bayandou were present at the Press conference.

Officials Meet With Visiting Hungarian Team

92AS0966A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 2 Apr 92 p 10

[Text] Bangladesh and Hungary on Wednesday agreed to make efforts to augment the level of trade relations and diversify Hungarian imports from Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The agreement emanated from official level talks held between the two countries in a "very friendly and cordial atmosphere reflecting the close traditional relations between them." On the Bangladesh side at the talks, held on Tuesday and Wednesday, was led by Additional Foreign Secretary (B) A.H. Mahmood Ali while the Hungarian side was headed by visiting Deputy State Secretary of Hungary Denes Tomaj. The Bangladesh delegation included Ambassador S.M. Rashed Ahmed, Director General Europe.

The talks covering wide ranging subjects of bilateral, regional and international concerns also reviewed in depth bilateral, political, economic, trade and cultural relations between the two countries.

The two governments expressed the desire to further expand and deepen the bilateral relations and contacts.

Apart from Hungarian involvement in joint venture in the field of pharmaceutical, it was agreed that both sides would explore the possibility of expanding joint venture in other mutually beneficial fields.

It was also agreed that both sides would make effort to augment the level of trade relationship. Hungary which currently imports jute and jute goods worth 30 million U.S. dollars would be happy to diversify her trade with Bangladesh in other areas including ready-made garments, leather goods, tea, etc.

The Hungarian side emphasised the need for private sector organisation of the two countries to establish direct contacts in view of the emphasis laid by both the countries on free market economy. The Hungarian side also expressed full support and solidarity with Bangladesh on the issue of Myanmar refugees.

Hungary appreciated the manner in which Bangladesh Government had responded to the exodus of Burmese refugees and looking after the Myanmar refugees with utmost care despite limited resources.

The Hungarian side expressed the hope that the Myanmar refugee issue would be resolved bilaterally and in a peaceful manner.

The Hungarian side also responded favourably with the idea of training of Bangladesh in the field of sports managements particularly in training coaches for football, tennis and swimming, etc.

Mr. Tomaj who was here on a two-day visit paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Mr. Mustafizur Rahman. During the meeting Mr. Tomaj conveyed the greetings to the Foreign Minister on behalf of the Foreign Minister of Hungary. He extended the invitation of the Government of Hungary to the Foreign Minister to visit Hungary.

The Foreign Minister said that despite his heavy preoccupation, he would look forward to visit Hungary at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Tomaj also paid a courtesy call on the Minister of Health and Family Welfare Chowdhury Kamal Ibna Yusuf and discussed ways and means of furthering cooperation between the two countries in the field of health.

'Hanging Judge' Strict With Drug Dealers

92AF0724B Al-Shariqah AL-KHALIJ in Arabic
9 Apr 92 p 20

[Interview With Counselor Jamal 'Abd-al-Halim, head of Cairo Appeals Court, by Samih Ahmad in Cairo, date not given: "'Hanging Judge' Loves Poetry, Music; 'I Have Issued 18 Death Sentences Against Drug Traffickers; My Sympathy Goes to Victims Who Are Worthier of It Than Defendant; 2 Million Users in Egypt; Malady Spreading to Arab Countries'"]

[Text] Cairo, AL-KHALIJ—The death sentence issued by Counselor Jamal 'Abd-al-Halim, the head of Cairo Appeals Court, against Faruq Yasin, an Egyptian drug trafficker who peddled his poisoned goods in front of one of Egypt's biggest athletic and social clubs (al-Shams Club) and among the club's frequenters, especially the youth—and the judge's insistence that it is necessary to carry out the death sentence against the defendant in front of the club where he practiced his criminal activity—this sentence has aroused a broad debate on the pages of the Egyptian press; among Egypt's intellectuals, psychologists, sociologists, legists, police; and, most importantly, among ordinary citizens. The majority agree on the need to carry out the death sentence against drug dealers and rapists openly and in a public place!

What has made the issue more interesting is that Dr. Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, the mufti of the republic, supports this opinion, which is also supported by Interior Minister Maj. Gen. 'Abd-al-Halim Musa, who has expressed his readiness to build the gallows in a public place at his own expense!

AL-KHALIJ has interviewed Counselor Jamal 'Abd-al-Halim, the man who issued the sentence, attaching to it the details that have provoked the debate. Counselor 'Abd-al-Halim has already issued 18 death sentences against drug smugglers and dealers, thus earning the nickname the 'hanging judge.'

Of his vision of the danger of drugs, Counselor Jamal 'Abd-al-Halim has said: "They are depicted best in what

his eminence the mufti of the republic has said about them, namely that they are the 'malady of poverty and misery and the germ of bankruptcy, submission, and humiliation.' I am extremely vexed by what I have heard from Dr. Wasim al-Sisi, one of our social intellectuals, who has said that preliminary figures show that nearly 2 million Egyptians are classified as addicts and users of all kinds of drugs. This means that the issue is not one of sporadic cases, but a serious phenomenon that preoccupies us and causes us grave concern. Some intellectuals liken drugs to AIDS, which has spread over the world."

Counselor 'Abd-al-Halim added: "What worries me even more is that the addiction phenomenon has begun to spread to a number of Arab countries. This is why we should sound the alarm, calling for a serious confrontation against this accursed affliction, which has begun to spread in all parts of our Arab homeland. It isn't only with tanks, missiles, and aircraft that an Arab country can be defeated. The common enemy can inflict a crushing defeat on us when he distorts our children's minds, thus causing our youth to lose their vigilance and to be unable to understand or deal with the burdens of life. This is graver and more dangerous than a military defeat. This is why we should wake up to the gravity of the dangers engulfing us."

Barons Are Coming

[Ahmad] How do you see confronting this danger?

['Abd-al-Halim] First, we must protect the Arab world's vast borders from of infiltration by organized international Mafia rings. For example, Egypt's coastline is long, extending along the eastern and northern Mediterranean. The Red Sea coastline is also exposed, and there isn't enough enforcement to cover it entirely. Large quantities of drugs are cached in the disputed border area between Egypt and Sudan. The area is rugged, with sand dunes that make it difficult for the enforcement agencies to penetrate. The danger lies in the fact that this area has no identity. It is under neither Egyptian nor Sudanese administrative control.

We add to this the border with Libya, which is now open for the movement of citizens. The latest signs indicate that this border has become a direction from which drugs enter the country.

This motivates us to say that the Border Guard, who still use camels for transportation, aren't enough to protect the long borders. This is why I would task the Egyptian Army with the mission of guarding these long borders, and of fighting the operations to smuggle drugs into the country with all firmness and with all the resources at their disposal.

I should also draw attention to the fact that Latin America's barons, who form an international "drug Mafia," have begun to consider new markets in the wake of the war that has been launched against them by the U.S. administration. This war has almost succeeded in stopping the smuggling of drugs from these southern

neighbors of the United States. Naturally, it isn't easy for the barons to accept a recession in their trade. They are giving serious thought to opening new distribution outlets.

The spotlight must also be focused strongly on countries that export dreadful quantities of heroin, such as Taiwan and Thailand. This requires some sort of international cooperation among the Arab and international drug enforcement agencies. Cooperation with the UN organizations in this regard must also be emphasized.

Camps for Addicts!

[Ahmad] This is for confrontation with, or protection from, the outside world. But what about the domestic situation, meaning the demand for this trade?

[Abd-al-Halim] First, there is the question of family supervision and of the right upbringing, supervision, and followup of children.

Second, there is the question of how to deal with addiction cases in an organized manner, especially since government sanitariums [presumably meaning rehabilitation centers] have failed to perform the mission entrusted to them. Private sanitariums have also proven a failure. They are so exorbitantly expensive that an addict needs 3,000 Egyptian pounds monthly in these sanitariums.

This is why I have urged, and continue to urge, that addicts be treated in disciplined camps. When an addict shows signs of recovery, he can be transferred to a scout-style youth camp where he makes a number of new friends, far from the evil friends whom he had previously associated with, and who had pushed him toward addiction.

I Apply the Law

[Ahmad] You have gained a reputation as the 'hanging judge.' Why?

[Abd-al-Hamid] Whoever says or alleges this because I have issued 18 death sentences must also admit that I have issued hundreds of verdicts of innocence.

But since the promulgation of Law 122 of 1989, the death sentence has become the penalty for bringing drugs into the country. The penalty for drug traffickers has also been stiffened to the death sentence. The same law has stiffened the penalty for those who traffic in any narcotic substances in clubs and houses of worship, including mosques and churches, and [military] camps and their environs. In these cases, the penalty has been raised to the death sentence. If this is the country's legislative policy, then it is normal that court decisions should be compatible with the tendency stipulated by the legislator in this regard.

Regarding the latest sentence, the defendant is a man who has sold heroin around al-Shams Club, and he has

been sentenced to death because he has met the two conditions determined by the legislator.

I would like to add that I am very sympathetic and compassionate in numerous other cases. But in this type of case, all my sympathy goes to the thousands of innocent victims. They are worthier of care, sympathy, and humanitarianism. This is why we have said in the particulars of the sentence: "Your judges have found it difficult to be merciful to you. If you want mercy, then seek it for the victims on whom you have preyed."

Respect for Public Sentiment

[Ahmad] Your latest sentence, which calls for carrying out the death sentence at the scene of the crime, has provoked extensive opposition. Those opponents believe that, to start with, a death sentence is incompatible with the principles of human rights and that it is an uncivilized act that has been done away with in numerous countries. Some opponents also see that the death sentence has generally never stopped the proliferation of crime.

[Abd-al-Halim] First, disagreement in opinion doesn't spoil friendship. I believe that we must listen to the ordinary citizen's intellectual pulse. I completely accept whoever has supported, opposed, or expressed reservation.

If some people claim and allege that the death sentence is a savage, barbarian punishment that is incompatible with the age, then my view is that this is a mistaken idea. For our conditions in Egypt, this penalty is an urgent need. It is not right for us to emulate other countries. Each country has its distinctive conditions and circumstances. I tell these people that savagery and barbarism are allowing the addiction malady to proliferate in our country without our being able to confront it. These people should reexamine international laws to realize that the death sentence continues to be applied in many of the U.S. states, where it is carried out by electrocution. Numerous countries had abolished the death sentence but then reinstated it when the international Mafia proliferated and terrorism spread.

Ten years ago, I attended a dialogue between the Egyptian and Italian justice ministers. The Italian minister expressed his bitterness over Italy's inability to confront the manifestations of terrorism demonstrated by the international Mafia and the Red Brigade and to stop the assassination of judges and policemen assigned to prevent such activities, considering that Italian legislation didn't allow them to confront these groups with the required firmness, because the Italian Parliament had abolished the death sentence.

If we return to the case that has provoked this debate, then the convict has already been sentenced twice to life at hard labor! Is it reasonable or imaginable that the court would sentence him to life at hard labor for a third time?

Decline in Drug Trade

As for the latest protest, I wish to assert that, in the wake of the death sentences against heroin traffickers, graphs and indicators of smuggling operations have dropped considerably. I beg you to check with the Counter-narcotics Administration. You would learn that some small industrial outfits have closed their doors because they were fronts for trafficking in white poisons and other drugs.

Moreover, I haven't called for a public execution and I haven't urged the legislative authority to amend the existing law. I have only appealed for enacting a legal provision that has existed since 1956, namely Article 65 of the prison bylaws, which provides for implementing a penalty inside a jail or in another concealed place. In this case, I have shielded the convict, even though he didn't protect his victims.

It isn't enough for me or for any citizen to read a report in fine print in a hidden corner of the press saying that the death sentence has been carried out in the appeals jail, and to have a black flag flown over the jail as the only indication of the execution. This is totally inadequate.

I have called for a concealed place, whether a black tent, a closed pavilion, a mobile trailer, or any other means. The important thing is that execution of the penalty be at the site where the convict has had his last trip with crime, i.e., at the scene of the crime, and that the public and the victim's kinsmen be entitled to watch this sight. But they will not see flowing blood or mutilation of the convict's body. It is as if I am protecting the culprit, even though he hasn't protected our youth and our children!

Slow Justice

[Ahmad] Another opposing opinion is that decisions on cases that arouse public opinion, such as drug and rape cases, come so late that the people lose their awareness of the serious nature of these crimes.

[Abd-al-Halim] This is completely true. Slow justice is very close to injustice. This is why I have always issued my sentences at the appropriate time. For example, the case of Faruq Yasin, the latest convict, took no more than two months. I share your opinion that sentences in cases that arouse the public opinion must be issued as quickly as possible, so that the souls provoked by these heinous crimes can be pacified.

I Love Music and Poetry

[Ahmad] I have learned that you love literature and that you hold a weekly literary session. How does this fit in with the deterrent sentences you issue, such as the death sentence?

[Abd-al-Halim] I admit that I love poetry and music and that I am fond of knowledge. After the dozens of hours I spend reading, examining, and analyzing court cases presented to me, there is no doubt that I need one day a

week to develop my inner feelings. Moreover, my decision on any case is nothing but a long trip of suffering and long sleepless hours. After I read every word and letter, I let my conscience and my faith be the judge, so that I can uncover the truth that I seek and want. So when I utter the sentence, I feel calm, I have a clear conscience, and I sleep soundly.

Talks With Saudi Prince Khalid Reported

92AS0970A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 13 Apr 92 pp 1, 10

[Text] Visiting Saudi Prince Sultan 'Abd-al-'Aziz-bin Khaled Sunday assured that Saudi Arabia will always stand by the side of Bangladesh under any circumstances, reports UNB.

The assurance came when the Saudi Prince, now on a 4-day visit to Bangladesh, called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office Sunday morning.

Prince Khaled said that his country will create an international pressure for early return of Rohingya Muslim refugees to Myanmar.

King Fahd has taken all necessary steps to help Bangladesh in this regard, he said. "We will try for a permanent solution to the Rohingya refugee problem," the visiting prince added.

Recalling the participation of Bangladesh troops in the Gulf war against Iraq, Prince Khaled—who was a commander of the joint forces against Iraqi invasion of Kuwait—said he was happy to see for himself the country and people who fought shoulder to shoulder with the Saudi forces.

He lauded the efficiency and discipline of Bangladesh forces displayed during the war.

Prince Khaled also announced a personal donation of one million U.S. dollars for the Rohingya Muslim refugees. This is apart from other Saudi aid.

Begum Zia said the visit of the Prince will strengthen the existing ties between the two countries. She said Saudi Arabia is a close friend of Bangladesh.

Bangladeshi soldiers, she said, are not only efficient in war fields, but also in other fields of humanitarian tasks. In this context, she mentioned the army's role during cyclone and other natural calamities when they stood by the people.

The Prime Minister thanked King Fahd for assistance to the Rohingya refugees as well as for the Muslim Ummah as a whole. She recalled the Saudi hospitality during her visit last year.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Hasan Ahmad, and Chief of army staff Lt. General Nur ad-Din Khan were present during the meeting.

BSS adds: Saudi Prince Sultan 'Abd-al-'Aziz-bin-Khaled met Foreign Minister A.S.M Mustafizur Rahman at the latter's office in Dhaka on Sunday.

During the meeting Foreign Minister Mustafizur Rahman proposed for increasing economic cooperation among the Islamic countries, according to a Foreign Office spokesman. Mr. Rahman also pleaded for utilisation of surplus manpower of the Islamic countries for their common benefit, the spokesman said.

Prince Khaled assured the Foreign Minister that he would convey the proposals to the appropriate quarter for consideration. Another topic which figured prominently in the discussion was the possibility of introduction of reinsurance system for the Islamic countries, the spokesman said.

Mr. Rahman also referred to the current Myanmar Muslim refugee problem and some regional matters with the royal guest.

Prince Khaled, who is currently on a four-day official visit said, "Bangladesh has a special place in the heart of Saudi people."

In this connection he recalled the valuable contributions of Bangladesh Army contingent in the Gulf war. He said, "Bangladesh has always participated in just cause despite its own problems." He described Bangladesh as an "important part of the Muslim world" with which he said, "we share many problems and prospects."

Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman, Ambassador Fazlur Rahman, Saudi Charge d'Affaires Talaat Hamza Shera and senior members of the entourage of the royal guest were present during the meeting.

PAKISTAN

Challenges to Country's Security Reviewed

92AS0910A Karachi JASARAT in Urdu 19 Apr 92 p 5

[Article by Mian Mohammad Osman, "Three Critical Challenges Facing Pakistan; by Nationality, Religion, Language, Culture, and Geography, Kashmir Is a Part of Pakistan"]

[Text] The current government and the country face three critical issues, which need careful thought and quick and correct solutions because these problems will have far-reaching effects on Pakistan's future. The first issue is that of Afghanistan and a speedy and suitable solution of this problem is important for Pakistan. A peaceful and permanent solution for the Afghanistan problem is not possible without the consent of the major mujaheddin groups. The mujaheddin set a shining example of courage and perseverance; their patience, determination, and struggle in the face of the most difficult challenges altered the course of history and brought about important and far-reaching changes in the map of the world. This great victory of the Afghans is

due, first of all, to their own courage and sacrifices; but the aid and support of Pakistan and its people were the next most effective factors in bringing about this success. The Government of Pakistan at that time, with the support of the people of Pakistan, came to the aid of the people of Afghanistan. Now that the time has come to enjoy the fruits of this great and unparalleled effort, the United States and European countries are busily pocketing the rewards while the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan are deprived of the fruits of their unparalleled sacrifices, and conspiracies are afoot to keep them deprived for ever. It is necessary, therefore, that the solution of the Afghan problem be in the interests of the Afghan mujaheddin and Pakistan so that both countries may achieve their goals. The signing of the Geneva agreement was a serious mistake. A nonparty assembly even ratified this agreement. An all-party conference was convened in an effort to obtain the support of all political parties; what was ignored was the viewpoint and the power of the Afghan mujaheddin who rejected the agreement. The result was that enemies gained their objective and Afghanistan and Pakistan are still burning in the fires of disorder. If we should again seek a solution that ignores Afghanistan's effective power, let me warn the Government of Pakistan that the new solution will suffer a worse fate than the Geneva agreement; peace will never be restored in Afghanistan and our hopes of establishing territorial, trade, and economic relations with the newly independent states of Central Asia will never be realized. The lands of Samarkand and Bukhara attest to our glorious and beautiful past and we are impatiently waiting to establish brotherly relations on all levels with the great people of those areas. To us as Muslims and Pakistanis, Central Asia is as important as Afghanistan. It is the dearest wish of every Pakistani that Afghanistan attain true freedom as have the Muslim states of Central Asia; we want the illegal government imposed by Russia on Afghanistan to come to an end and be replaced by a government representing the people of Afghanistan. The Central Asian states as well as the more than a dozen and a half Russian [dominated] European countries who have been liberated owe their freedom to the struggle of the Afghans; thus, it should be unacceptable to all countries who claim to support freedom and justice that Afghanistan, which brought freedom to more than 18 oppressed nations should itself remain deprived of liberty.

Pakistan can establish relations with the newly independent Muslim states of Central Asia only if a government truly representative of the people and friendly to Pakistan and Islam is established in Afghanistan. It is thus necessary that Pakistan prevent members of the Najib administration or individuals nominated by it to join the future Afghan government under the pretext of the UN proposed solution or any other means. The United States and other so-called democratic and civilized Western countries solve their problems according to the will of the people; they hold elections in their own countries and find solutions to problems by democratic means. They beat the drums of democracy all over the world; but

when it comes to seeking a solution for the Afghan problem, these same Western countries talk sometimes of convening a jarga [tribal meeting], sometimes of a so-called national assembly or of monarchy. The pretext used is that Afghan society is divided into different tribes; hence elections would not be a suitable solution. To serve their own interests, these Western countries used to portray the mujaheddin as heroes; now these same mujaheddin are being called fundamentalists, terrorists, drug dealers and various other names. The mujaheddin are insisting with all their power that only an elected government be established in Afghanistan; but the so-called democracy loving world powers are rejecting the mujaheddin demand for elections and resorting to nondemocratic tricks to impose their own solution on the Afghans. The honor-loving nation of Afghanistan will not be taken in by the machinations of the United States and its supporters. The solution of the Afghan issue is possible only through elections and the process of holding elections should be in accordance with the wishes of the people of Afghanistan and the mujaheddin. The correct and timely solution of the Afghanistan problem will have important and far reaching benefits for Pakistan.

1. From the point of view of defense, a government in Afghanistan friendly to Pakistan and Islam will provide a permanent protection for the northwestern borders of Pakistan and will thus allow Pakistan to devote all its attention to defending its eastern frontier.

2. The successful completion of the Afghan jihad will further spread a wave of happiness, confidence and awakening throughout the Muslim nations; the people of both Afghanistan and Pakistan will enjoy the fruits of their sacrifices.

3. We will be able to establish trade, economic, and social relations with the newly independent Muslim Central Asian states by way of Afghanistan and new avenues of economic and commercial progress will be opened to Pakistan. Although from the point of view of language and culture, Iran is closer than Pakistan to the Central Asian states, commercially, geographically, and in every other way, Pakistan will be preferred by the Central Asian states. We can send to these states innumerable foodstuffs, manufactured goods and industrial machinery and import many items for our own use and thus reap great benefits. We will give and receive innumerable economic benefits by providing land- and sea-trade routes for these Central Asian states, for Pakistan is in the fortunate situation of having seaports closest to these states offering the most suitable outlets for their trade. Russian ports are too distant and even Iranian ports are comparatively distant and not as advantageous as outlets for Central Asian trade; thus Pakistan could become a natural highway for its brother Central Asian countries. Pakistan and Central Asia could provide innumerable trade, economic, and social benefits to each other and take rapid steps towards progress and stability. If a timely and correct solution is not found for the

Afghan problem, we will not only be deprived of innumerable benefits but also fall victim to various destructive losses. Not only the Muslims of Afghanistan and Pakistan but all the Muslims and other oppressed and weak nations of the world will lose hope and heart. The people of Afghanistan and Pakistan in particular and Muslims in general will suffer negative results.

The second critical challenge facing our dear country is the Kashmir problem; and a timely and correct solution of this problem will deeply affect Pakistan's future. While attending the meeting in Tehran of the economic cooperation organization, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said in an interview with the BBC that a free Kashmir would be acceptable to Pakistan. But such a solution would be ruinous for Pakistan. The Kashmir issue resulted from the Indian contravention of the formula established for the division of India in 1947. The formula agreed upon was that Pakistan would receive areas with a Muslim majority and India areas with a Hindu majority. Kashmir is a part of Pakistan by nationality, language, religion, culture, and geography; the direction of its rivers and natural resources are towards Pakistan. As everyone knows and history has proved, Pundit Nehru and Lord Mountbatten conspired to deprive the people of Kashmir and Pakistan of their natural and legitimate rights. A recent book by Lord Mountbatten's assistant reveals this conspiracy in even more detail. When the people of Kashmir rose up in death defying opposition to this plot, India itself brought the issue to the United Nations. With the consent of India, Pakistan, and Shaykh Abdulla, the representative of the Kashmiris at that time, the United Nations passed repeated resolutions determining that a referendum was the right solution for the problem in which the people of Kashmir would decide to join either India or Pakistan. There was no demand or mention in these resolutions of a third choice. For the last 44 years, the people of Kashmir and Pakistan have remained steadfast on the referendum demand. Those individuals who are now asking for a third choice for the solution of the Kashmir problem are in fact guilty of treason against Pakistan and Kashmir. This third choice is a new conspiracy by the eternal enemies of Pakistan and Kashmir and the sooner the Government of Pakistan realizes this, the better. We should stay steadfast on the single demand that in accordance with the UN resolutions, a speedy referendum be held in Kashmir so that the people may decide which country they wish to join, Pakistan or India. The slogan of an independent Kashmir has been created by powers inimical to Islam and Pakistan in order to establish a base in Kashmir for anti-Islamic forces who would then exercise control over Pakistan, China, Afghanistan, and the newly independent Central Asian countries. They want to cripple Pakistan and enslave the Kashmiris and sink another dagger like Israel into the body of the Muslim nation. We should understand this conspiracy and quickly take concrete measures to foil the plot otherwise time will speed by and the fate that befalls Pakistan's major artery [Kashmir] will be the fate of Pakistan as well.

The third critical challenge facing Pakistan is the continuation and promotion of its nuclear program. Pakistan's prime minister suggested on 6 June 1991, that a conference of South Asian countries be called to discuss the nuclear issue and that Russia, China, the United States, India, and Pakistan participate; that restrictions be placed on the nuclear progress of the three major South Asian countries: China, India, and Pakistan; and that subsequent to that, all nuclear installations of these countries be opened to international inspection. There was a major defect in this proposal that failed to attract notice at that time but was later removed when Shaheryar, foreign secretary [of Pakistan], announced to the world in an interview with the WASHINGTON POST, that in 1990, Pakistan had attained the technical capacity of building a nuclear bomb; but Pakistan did not create a nuclear bomb then nor did it intend to do so in the future. We thus acknowledged our nuclear capacity before the world; however, the fact is that in the nuclear field, we are far behind our eternal enemy India, which exploded a nuclear device in 1974 and has since progressed considerably in that field. As long as we do not reach a position of equality with India, we should not agree to open our nuclear installations to international inspection. An agreement signed between parties who are not equal is no agreement at all but is really pressure and threats and to accept an enemy's pressure in defense matters is tantamount to surrender. Over the last few years, the United States and advanced European countries have restricted every kind of aid to Pakistan. They have closed the doors of nuclear education to Pakistanis all over the world, even to Pakistanis who are citizens of these progressive countries. The conspiracy to weaken and harm Pakistan in every way possible is being pursued energetically. For a long time, Pakistan has been suffering losses that it would have faced if it had built a nuclear bomb; but it has attained none of the advantages that it would have gained by building a nuclear bomb. Pakistani is a peaceful nation. We have never had any aggressive intentions towards any country in the past nor will we have such intentions in the future. But the bitter experiences of the last 45 years have taught us that we should strengthen our defensive capabilities as far as it is possible so that our eternal enemy, which has committed aggression against Pakistan three times in the past, broke Pakistan into two in 1971 and still continues its incessant conspiracies and machinations against us, will desist from its aggressive intentions in the future. The Government of Pakistan should make preparations immediately to explode a nuclear device and reap the benefits of having this deterrent, which is a shield for the defense of the country but is not aimed aggressively against any other country. The deterrent is for our own defense and protection. If we should achieve the position of equality with India by exploding a nuclear device, then not only will the people of Pakistan feel secure but they will be infused with fresh courage and a sense of self-sacrifice. The many resources that we are forced to relinquish now for defense purposes would be utilized instead for our economic progress and stability.

Restoring Reserved Assembly Seats for Women Urged

92AS0981A Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English
3 May 92 p 6

[First paragraph is THE MUSLIM introduction]

[Text] Comparing the orgy in the NA [National Assembly] with that in L.A. in the United States, Shahid Ahmed suggests that the mighty non-Parliamentary forces might presume they have a good case to boot out such as Assembly and the electoral farce in the name of democracy.

There was certainly not much difference between what happened in Los Angeles and other looted cities of the United States on Saturday and what transpired in our National Assembly on Sunday, except that the MNAs [Members of National Assembly] did the looting peacefully as there was no resistance at all to their excesses.

The rioting and looting in the U.S. cities was unlawful, and over 1,500 persons were arrested in the first three days; but what happened in the NA where the MNAs were helping themselves in an orgiastic manner at the cost of the poor people of Pakistan was lawful as they are parliamentarians, members of a sovereign assembly who could do almost anything as long as they did not offend the President, the Prime Minister or the Army Chief of Staff.

Even Speaker Gohar Ayub did not want to blow the whistle and stop the orgy of self-service by the rich and powerful at the cost of the poor nation as he, too, was benefiting by all the perquisites and privileges and enhanced payments the bill provided for. The President, Prime Minister, the MNAs and Senators at the bottom were also the beneficiaries of the bill.

So there was that incredible but understandable harmony between the ruling party and the Opposition that day.

But there the difference ends. In the case of Los Angeles and other U.S. cities, we know the total cost of the damage done; but we do not know the full cost of the enhanced payments, new privileges and perquisites to be provided to our rulers, including Ministers and Members of Parliament.

In the frantic hurry to get the bill passed, nobody cared to count the cost of the tally of concessions to those worthies from top to bottom.

You may think that your MNA or Senator is a political leader, but now he will regard himself as a diplomat as it is a diplomatic passport he and his wife will have. Will their cars now display CD [Corps Diplomatique] plates instead of golden-lettered plates saying they are MNAs or Senators? I presume, all powerful as they are, they have the option to display either kind of plates or both.

What is remarkable is that all the concessions and privileges provided by the bill, unanimously passed by the National Assembly in blissful hurry, will not be for now and hereafter but also will be provided to all those who have been members of the NA or Senate, Ministers, etc., since 1975. That means all those who were in the NA and Senate, and all those who held various offices at the centre since 1975 will enjoy such privileges. That means the privileges will begin with the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] MNAs, Senators, Ministers, etc., who were in their bastions of power between 1975 and 1977. Hence the PPP was enthusiastic in supporting the bill. Even such doughty champions of democratic norms and parliamentary perfection like Chaudhri Aitzaz Ahsan and Mr Iftikhar Gilani were all for the exceedingly profitable bill—a veritable gold mine for them.

And why not? Following the amendment to the bill moved by Mr Gul Hamid Rockhri all Members of Parliament are entitled to import a car free of customs duty, sales tax, Iqra surcharge, etc. The members quickly adopted the bill. Evidently, this privilege will be available to all those who have been members of Parliament since 1975, including the members of the first PPP-dominated Parliament. Clearly, the more, the merrier, and as the MNAs were lavishly distributing among themselves all manner of privileges and perquisites, they did not want to forget their distant predecessors or forbearers.

Even former PPP Law Minister, Mr Iftikhar Gilani, was not content with all the privileges and perquisites recommended by the Standing Committee of the NA which gave a hundred per cent increase in their allowances to the top people of the country.

It was Mr Gilani who moved an amendment which demanded diplomatic passports for all Parliamentarians and their wives. I should think that the representatives of the People's Party in the legislatures are representatives of the people, but Gilani thinks they should be regarded diplomats and hence should have diplomatic passport.

But even more intriguing is his amendment demanding a gun of nonprohibited bore and another gun of prohibited bore without licences for all Parliamentarians. One may ask against whom he is going to use such guns, but more relevant is the question why he needs such guns without licences as he intends to keep such guns for life.

The NA endorsed that demand, too, instantly. It was really kind of the MNAs not to have brought more amendments for far more expensive privileges and perquisites for themselves and their predecessors for the last 17 years. I am sure even the members of the Majles-i-Shoora would be entitled to all such perquisites.

As a result, many of the Members of the Parliament will come to have several cars tax-free. As the bill is effective from 1975, those who have been Members of the Assemblies since then can have up to five cars tax-free. If the

first PPP-dominated Parliament was dissolved in 1977 we had in 1983 the Majles-i-Shoora, and three more assemblies since 1985.

We will not know the full range of additional benefits available to the MNAs Senators and others until their full tally is officially available, and the total cost is counted. The bill provides an incentive to the Parliamentarians, who can get themselves elected without fail, to move for frequent dissolution of the NA as with each new Assembly they can get a new car tax-free. And there are no limits to the tax exemption they could enjoy. They could have duty-free cars with total duties of RS.10 million. Super-luxury cars carry duties as high as 500 per cent.

Only one man stood out clean in the orgy of self-serving in the NA on Sunday. He was Mr Zafar Ali Shah of PPP who defied his party colleagues and opposed the obscene manner the MNAs were giving themselves numerous perquisites and privileges instead of increasing the salary of the very poor and low-paid. The minimum that he wanted was that the bill be given due consideration for at least one day. But the excited members wanted to give no time for cool consideration of the bill. Instead, there was some merry falling over each other to come up with one amendment after another to give themselves more and more, including a free telephone and use of VIP rooms forever, even if one has been a Parliamentarian for a brief while.

With both the Prime Minister and the Opposition leader absent from the House, the Speaker should have stood up for the Rules of Procedure when the members went for the big binge; but he did not and that was painful. He referred instead to the agreement reached between the government and the Opposition outside to get the bill passed quickly and to accept each other's amendments, including verbal amendments. It was truly a free for all which nauseates the people as a whole.

In 1990, Ms Bhutto as the Prime Minister gave the Parliamentarians a ten per cent rise in their emoluments but now they have a 100 per cent rise in allowances and far more expensive perquisites. Will they now back a 100 per cent rise in salaries of the employees of the government when the federal budget is presented on May 14?

What is truly disappointing is that the Assembly of 217 members could produce only one Syed Zafar Ali Shah to protest against the loot of public funds by the Parliament itself.

And now it will be the turn of the Members of the Provincial Assemblies [MPA] to pass similar bills demanding almost similar privileges. And there can be no moral justification for denying them such large emoluments and lavish perquisites if the Parliamentarians are going to have them.

They may ask that if the President, Prime Minister, Governor and Chiefs of Staffs can have a luxury car tax-free, and Service Chiefs have this privilege right from

1947, why can't the elected folks have similar privileges and more? India permits its President and Governors to import a car but they can import only one car in their lifetime and they have to pay full taxes on them. But in Pakistan a person who has held several offices, including temporarily, can import several luxury limousines tax-free, sell a few of them and retain one of them or more.

Don't be surprised if soon Secretary-Generals and Secretaries to the Government ask for the same facilities and concessions. They can claim they have earned their right to such concessions by the dint of their service to Pakistan. Judges of senior courts can also advance such claims. Who can disagree with them in such an environment? All of them may ask that if luxury taxis can be tax-free, why not Secretary's cars?

All this is making out a great case for abolishing import duties altogether and declaring Pakistan as a tax-holiday state in its entirety. From selective exemptions we must move towards universal exemptions regardless of the cost as we are not counting the cost of our follies and foibles any more. If there are popular protests against such excesses the volcano of popular discontent with social injustice, which the PM [Prime Minister] has been talking of can explode. And the dacoits will feel free to seize the luxury limousines which may soon become plentiful and vie with the tax-free limos.

But all is not lost yet. The Senate can refuse to pass such a bill following the persuasion of the Prime Minister. Even if the Senate passes such a bill, the President can refuse to give his assent. It is time the top people act instead of creating the kind of environment in which the Parliament is discrediting itself without any check. In fact, the mighty nonparliamentary forces might presume they have a good case for booting out such an Assembly and be done with the electoral farce in the name of democracy. Do the members of Parliament who hardly ever turn up in the legislature have the right to all these privileges and perquisites at the expense of poor Pakistan?

Sharif's 'Social Balance' Concern Doubted

92AS0981B Islamabad *THE MUSLIM* in English
5 May 92 p 6

[Editorial: "PM (Prime Minister) Promises To Tell the Truth and Take People Into Confidence"]

[Text] In a disarmingly candid address to his IJI [Islami Jamhoori Ittehad] colleagues in the parliament, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is reported to have spoken about the "volcano" of social imbalance, crippling debt burden and the "need to take hard decision." And in this grim context, Mr Sharif has a trifle uncharacteristically realised the government's duty to "tell the people the truth and to take them into confidence." Several thought provoking points emerge from these observations of the Prime Minister. First, that what he says is entirely indisputable in principle. Who would deny that social injustice is a devastating disease and could erupt into a cataclysm? Look at the United States and draw your

lessons. About the debt, the unfortunate truth is that the people have been deliberately kept in the dark by all governments, including Mr Nawaz Sharif's and the regime headed by his mentor Gen Zia. The other even more unfortunate truth is that it is the people who have been paying through their nose for debts incurred and squandered by those who brazenly refused to render any accounts. Why is it that Premier Nawaz Sharif has come to be assailed by the concern to tell the truth to the people? Since this is a revolution in the IJI style, it is natural to take a good look at it even though the development deserves nothing but unqualified welcome.

Mr Nawaz Sharif himself offers an interesting inkling as to the considerations obliging him to take the people into confidence. He has a stupendous problem but not much of a clue to solve it. That is the budget deficit. The national kitty never gave such a scaring look. Pakistan is not a poor country, given the abundance nature has blessed it with. A resource rich country has been impoverished by several governments but by none so cynically as the Zia regime. Of late, Mr Nawaz Sharif has been trying to distance himself from the misdeeds of the Zia years. But the more he tries to throw a cover over it, the more the truth shows. If he really and truly wishes to tell the people the facts, there is nothing that should inhibit his highly commendable resolve. Let him begin at the beginning. A fair and rational point may be the beginning of the last of the martial law junta.

All that Premier Sharif says about loans taken with total abandon and wasted on inessentials is true. Had the loans been honestly utilised and invested with good sense, we should have been reaping the harvest and not groaning under unsupportable burdens of repayment. Who is responsible for a decade and half of mindless imprudence and thieving? Surely not the people of Pakistan. They had no say in anything. Now the Prime Minister wants to take them into confidence for apparently no reason than the exasperating embarrassment of taking to hard decisions. His next advice to the people would be to make sacrifices for the good of the nation. There is nothing wrong in inviting people to tighten the belt and make sacrifices. But it is more than a little odd that sacrifices should be for the people to make and concessions and gifts for the political operators to get. The only proper course for the present government, a direct lineal descendant of the Zia regime, and committed to carry on the General's mission, is to first bring all those responsible for gigantic fraud and abuse of national resources to book and make them disgorge their ill-gotten gains. The bad debts and outright handouts to political associates of the present and previous governments should be duly accounted for. Once that is done, the Premier would be well within his rights to ask the people to bear the rigours of stringency. There is no indication that Mr Nawaz Sharif is going to recall the public wealth gifted to political agents of the Zia regime.

On the issue of defence expenditure it would not be easy to pick up an argument with Mr Nawaz Sharif. Defence

would always be the nation's priority No. 1. And the people of Pakistan have been generous on this score. Some might wonder if not occasionally generous to a fault. But that is not the point. For their country's defence the people would endure any sacrifice without a murmur. But here too, as elsewhere, the nation expects to be told the truth and taken into confidence. Selective confidence sharing does not always inspire trust. There can be no two opinions on the subject of defence but to evolve one national line and ensure it would enjoy total adherence, some solid homework has to be done.

The Prime Minister talks feelingly about social imbalance. It is most encouraging to note that he can focus on this subject. But to deplore the existence of an evil is not enough. One should like to hear the PM [Prime Minister] spell out his ideas about what may be social balance and what is absence. He has seldom spoken of such mundane things being all the time busy with his clichés about Islamisation and chasing his elusive Jamaat-e-Islami coalition partners. Now that he has broached the topic of social balance, let him be more explicit. As far as one can see, his obsession with privatisation is difficult to reconcile with the basics of the principles of social justice and balance as he would put it. How can you be the apostle of privatisation and dispenser of social equality and balance at the same time? Make your choice, Mr Prime Minister, unless it is convincingly shown that privatisation is the way to social balance, an ordinary citizen would suspect Mr Nawaz Sharif has given himself to doublespeak.

The other fundamental point PM has made is about corruption and pilferage of public money. He is not far from the truth when he says it would be hard for him to ask the people to pay more taxes unless he can assure them that he means to plug the leakage. That is correct. But his reluctance on the score of taxes should be accompanied by a commensurate concern to do something effective to curb corruption. With the government being on the eve of the budget, to argue that taxes cannot be raised before the evil of corruption has been vanquished is rather fanciful. While on the subject of taxes, Mr Nawaz Sharif remains shy of the idea of taxing agricultural incomes. How long is he going to dodge this hard reality? Or, is he inching his way towards it?

Government-Opposition Consensus Urged

92AS0981C Islamabad *THE MUSLIM* in English
8 May 92 p 6

[Editorial: "The Ball Is in the Court of the Politicians"]

[Text] Constant contact and dialogue between the Government and the Opposition is the essence of parliamentary democracy. Without this the legislature cannot exercise control over the executive nor can the Government function in an orderly fashion. Unfortunately, the channels of communication between the Government and the Opposition in Pakistan have always remained

clogged. Immediately after independence, political contacts were used by different factions of the ruling Muslim League more to secure offices than to evolve a consensus on national issues. There were not too many claimants in the beginning and the ruling junta was able to accommodate most of the opponents and dissidents. As the number of contenders grew, the ruling party had to resort to the device of disqualifying members of Assemblies from holding public offices on all kinds of charges. By 1958 the politicians had exhausted all the permutations and combinations and the convention of dialogue collapsed along with the Parliamentary system.

After the first four years of military rule, Ayub Khan reintroduced the National and Provincial Assemblies through indirect elections and the game of numbers started all over again. He was able to play one group against the other but after the 1965 elections, the tension between the Convention Muslim League and other political parties began to mount and within the League itself powerful groups started competing for higher offices and greater access to the centre of power. When the whole system began to crumble in 1969, Ayub Khan decided to enter into a dialogue with the Opposition. By then the country was in the grip of an agitation in which most of the Opposition parties and groups were involved. A Direct Action Committee (DAC) was set up to guide the agitation and force Ayub Khan to come to the negotiating table. Political thinkers, academicians, and journalists all emphasised that dialogue was essential in any democratic system and Ayub Khan should enter into negotiations with the Opposition to save the country from chaos. Ayub Khan bowed to these demands and invited the DAC to come to a Round Table Conference (RTC). The moment the invitation was issued, different opposition groups started asserting their right to join the DAC negotiating team. Whoever was left out threatened to boycott the RTC. A situation was reached when the convenor of DAC, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, came to Ayub Khan to say that he could not bring his team to the RTC unless Ayub Khan agreed to invite a number of politicians outside the DAC to participate in the Conference. When the Opposition was finally able to cobble together a motley group of negotiators, the whole ensemble disintegrated at first contact with the Government. Ayub Khan voluntarily conceded two major demands of the people, i.e., direct elections and the Parliamentary system and invited the Opposition to come into a national government to hold general elections in the country. He also announced that he would not be a candidate in the elections. All these concessions were seen by the Opposition as signs of weakness. Instead of trying to put the shattered pieces of democracy together, the politicians decided to put the country into the lap of the army. What followed was the tragic separation of East and West Pakistan.

After the trauma of 1971, the Government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto introduced the 1973 Constitution to which all the political parties had subscribed and the country was put back on the road to democracy. But after the

elections in 1977, the country was once again rocked by a popular agitation. The Government was accused of rigging the elections on a massive scale in a thoroughly shameless manner. When Bhutto could not control the agitation he decided to enter into a dialogue with the Opposition. What the people saw was action replay of the Round Table Conference of 1969. Nothing came out of the dialogue and once again the country was pushed into the arms of martial law.

It took the country 11 years to get out of the abyss to which it was consigned by a military ruler who used every trick in the bag to divide the society into ethnic and sectarian fragments. Only an accident finally restored the democratic system in the country though after a number of false starts.

We now have a democratic Government and a Parliament. Neither the Government nor the Parliament are generally accepted as legitimate. The position of the President is suspect because he derives his powers from the 8th Amendment of the Constitution, which was a product of political blackmail employed by General Ziaul Haq to subvert the sovereignty of Parliament with the connivance of a spineless assembly and a supine judiciary. True, the Prime Minister enjoys a large majority in the Parliament but he knows that not many members of his party are genuine representatives of the people. They have come to occupy their present position in the Government and the Assembly by manipulating and subverting the electoral process. They would change their loyalties at the drop of a hat. If they only heard the distant sounds of any Army Unit marching toward the Parliament House they would disappear in the bushes of Margalla Hills. Their interest is to feather their own nests even to the point of choking. Despite all these handicaps, a democratic Government is in office and it should be the endeavour of all political parties to ensure that the Government continues to function under the Constitution and remains accountable to the people. They must also see that the President is not persuaded or tempted to use his arbitrary powers under the 8th Amendment to dissolve the Assembly which could put the country back under martial law.

To do this the first step is for the Government and the Opposition to enter into serious direct negotiations to work out a consensus on major national issues. It is heartening that the Prime Minister has taken the initiative and invited Benazir Bhutto, the leader of Pakistan People's Party, to a discussion which should lead to a broad understanding between the Government and the Opposition on certain issues which are proving highly divisive. This dialogue will produce meaningful results only if Benazir Bhutto acts as the spokesperson of the Opposition. All her associates in the APC [All Parties Conference] or whatever other alphabetic arrangement they prefer, must place their full confidence in her and authorise her to discuss and negotiate all important matters with the Prime Minister. Those who refuse to give her such a mandate should be allowed to wither on the vine. The Prime Minister should do exactly the same.

For the dialogue to have any meaning or purpose it must be exclusively between Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto without any intermediaries or Advisers. Any other course would result only in confusion and create greater bitterness in society. Any attempt by Benazir Bhutto to draw up a list of her colleagues and associates to help her in the dialogue would reduce her to the position of a pawn on a shaky chessboard exactly as happened to Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan in 1969 and 1977. Benazir Bhutto has the stature and the following to enter into a dialogue with the Government as a representative of the people. She must accept the Prime Minister's invitation without delay and without preconditions. It would be a folly on her part to treat the invitation as a sign of weakness on the part of Nawaz Sharif. And she must not allow herself to get entangled in the web of "preconditions": that will drive her into a blind alley. Any agreement worked out by Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto will help steer the country out of its present crisis. If they fail to evolve a consensus on national issues the future of the country will be jeopardised. Once again the ball is in the court of the politicians. Will they smash it out of bounds or keep it in play however slippery the field?

Self-Serving Attitude of Assembly Members Scored

92AS0981D Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English
9 May 92 p 6

[Article by Shahid Ahmad: "Keeping Women Out of the Assemblies"; first paragraph is THE MUSLIM introduction; italicized words as published]

[Text] Women should be given the protection and status enjoined by Islam. That cannot be achieved through official enunciations alone. Instead the women should be in the assemblies to accomplish that, and prevent its violation in a society where the men are too ready to exploit women.

The longer the delay in accepting the legitimate demands of a people or group, the larger become their claims and the more insistent their demands. That is precisely what is happening following the inordinate delay in restoring the reserved seats for women in the national and provincial assemblies.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was not too slow in coming up with a mega-cabinet of 50 ministers, advisers and special assistants; but when it comes to restoration of women's seats through an amendment to the Constitution he has been dragging his feet. He has accepted their demand in principle but has not come up with the requisite legislation.

Nor have the agitated women, some of whom are keen on getting into the assemblies been given any clear indication of the day by which the amendment would be introduced in the National Assembly after which it has to go to the Senate.

Of course, the religious parties are not keen to have women in the Assemblies, and some of them like the Jamaat and Jamiatul Ulema-a-Islam in fact abhor their presence in their midst even when Dr. Noorjehan Pan-ezai is the Deputy Chairman of the Senate. The women hence suspect that the PM [Prime Minister], who is usually under the influence of the Jamaat-i-Islami which used to function as his think-tank, is cool towards the move to have women back in the assemblies.

Twelve active women organizations meeting under the auspices of the All Pakistan Women Association (APWA) on Karachi have come up with the demand for reserved seats for women equal to 25 per cent of the seats in each assembly.

The fact is that until Gen Zia increased the number of reserved seats for women to 20 in the National Assembly they had only ten seats. Women had five per cent of the seats in the provincial assemblies under the 1973 Constitution which he left untouched. So while they had less than 10 per cent of the seats in the NA [National Assembly] and only five per cent of the seats in the provincial assemblies, they have now advanced a claim for 25 per cent seats in both the assemblies.

They have however limited the period of this reservation to 10 years, as it was earlier. But they can legitimately claim such reservation for a period of 20 to 25 years as they are not likely to have equal rights with men, not under the law, but in actual practice before that period. The poor progress of women's rights during the last 45 years, and particularly the regression during and after the Zia years testify to that amply. The constitutional amendment should hence provide a 15 to 20-year period for such a reversal.

There is undoubtedly a strong case for a sizeable women representation in the Assemblies. Women representatives alone can protect the rights of women and children to some extent in the male-dominated assemblies with the overriding voice of the *Mullah* or their impact.

Islam regards men and women as equal. And there are verses in the Holy Quran which give women a privileged position; but in reality women's rights are abridged or violated in Muslim countries.

Women have suffered a great deal in Pakistan following the introduction of Hudood ordinances, and children, too, have suffered in the process. Cases of rape of women, gang rape, rape by close relatives and by police officers and constables, even in police stations, are on the increase.

In rape cases the women tend to get punished while the male offender goes scot free. Women employed as domestic servants or in factories are exploited and paid poorly. And cases of dispossessing of the properties of

women by their relatives and other forms of maltreatment are also on the increase.

Small children are employed, more like indentured labour and exploited by the employers who might have lent some money to their fathers in desperate need of money. The number of children suffering from malnutrition and various other forms of curable diseases is very large. And too many children are still not able to attend schools for one reason or another.

The male representatives in the assemblies are not able to protect the rights of such women and children. Nor are they inclined to study the problem in depth and find solutions. Hence the imperative need for women in a sizeable strength in the assemblies.

But when they demand reserve seats equal to 25 per cent of the seats in the National and Provincial Assemblies they are asking for too many seats. If so many women can come to the Assemblies through direct elections that may be unexceptionable. But if so many come through indirect elections, as is the case so far but with far less seats, that can give rise to major complications and vitiate the democratic process.

If women come through direct elections their constituencies will be four times the size of the constituencies of man, and they will be too large. And their election campaign will be too costly.

And if they come through indirect elections that could mean four members of the NA voting for a woman member and four members of the Provincial Assemblies [PA] voting for a PA woman member. That will be too small a constituency.

There is plenty of scope for corruption when the constituencies are so small. The woman candidates or their husbands or parents can buy the votes of two or more members and ensure their success.

In the past election of women too, there were reports of the play of money. And that can become a large scale game if the constituencies become as small as four members of the NA or PA. The right course in such a context is to go back to the provisions of the 1973 Constitution which provided for 10 seats for women in the NA and 5 per cent seats for them in the provincial assemblies.

If such women are active and articulate they can prevail and protect the interests of women and children. What matters is not the mere numerical strength of women in the assemblies but their quality and vigilance, and their insight into the problems of women and children.

And it will not be necessary to have five per cent of the nontechnical seats for women in the Senate as well. As the legislation passed by the NA goes to the Senate for

approval, there is need for women to be present there too, and that can't be left to Dr Noorjehan Panzai alone. Seventeen months is a long period for the assemblies to function without women. Ms Benazir Bhutto and Begum Nusrat Bhutto are in the NA but from the general seats. Hence the PM should fulfil his commitment to the women and the nation quickly.

Women should be given the protection and status enjoined by Islam. That cannot be achieved through official enunciations alone. Instead the women should be in the assemblies to accomplish that, and prevent its violation in a society where the men are too ready to exploit women.

Agreement Reached With Iran To Set Up Refinery

BK1005114892 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 10 May 92

[Text] The federal minister for production, Mr. Islam Nabi, has said that Pakistan and Iran have agreed to set up a refinery in Pakistan as a joint venture on 50-50 equity basis. In an interview with our Faisalabad representative, he said the project with a capacity of 6 million tons per annum would cost about \$900 million and would be completed by 1997. The minister said negotiations were also in progress to set up sugar and cement plants in Bangladesh and Malaysia.

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11 June 1992